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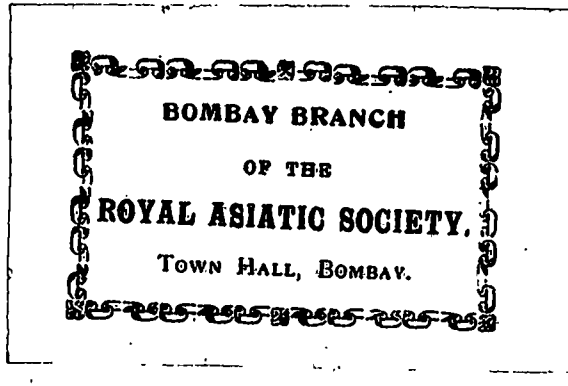

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THE

ACCESSION OF NICHOLAS I.

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COMPILED, BY SPECIAL COMMAND OF

THE EMPEROR ALEXANDER II.,

BY HIS IMPERIAL MAJESTY'S SECRETARY OF STATE,

BARON M. KORFF,

AND TRANSLATED FROM THE ORIGINAL RUSSIAN.

THIRD IMPRESSION.

(NOW FIRST PUBLISHED.)

TT 419

LONDON:
JOHN MURRAY, ALBEMARLE STREET.
1857.

Published simultaneously in Russia, England, France, and Germany.

947.07
Kor/Acc
35461

LONDON: PRINTED BY WILLIAM CLOWES AND SONS, STAMFORD STREET
AND CHARING CROSS.

PREFACE.

"IF I am Emperor only for one hour, I will "show myself worthy of being so."

So spoke* the never-to-be-forgotten Emperor Nicholas I., on the morning of the 14th of December, 1825, to the assembled commanding officers of the regiments of the Guard.

And nobly did he fulfil this first Imperial sentence that passed his lips! During thirty years, amid the blessings of the world and the thunders of war, in justice and legislation, in the work of the internal reform and external aggrandisement of his Russia, everywhere and on every occasion, did the Emperor Nicholas I. watch over her honour and her glory, the father and the first and most devoted son—of his country.

"I die"—wrote he in that touching document, his last will—"filled with ardent love "for our glorious Russia, which I have served "with all my soul, with faith, with sincerity; "I regret that I have not been able to do all

* *Vide* p. 174.

" the good which I so sincerely desired." Man cannot do everything; but Nicholas performed all that was possible for one man.

But never, perhaps, were two of the great qualities of the departed sovereign—courage and presence of mind—destined to exhibit themselves more brightly and more intensely, than in the first moments of his reign. In conformity with the truly filial idea of his august Heir-apparent, a detailed account of the events of the 14th of December, and of the occurrences which preceded that day, was drawn up as early as the year 1848. After perusing the narrative, and having, by repeated corrections in his own handwriting, given it his last approval, the late Emperor of glorious memory decidedly refused to permit the publication of this narrative. Such had been the march and connection of events and the personal actions of the young Monarch, that the mere simple, strict, and naked truth must have in this case appeared to assume the mask of flattery; and true greatness is ever accompanied by modesty.

The following narrative was twice printed, but on each occasion only to the extent of twenty-five copies, solely for the members of the Imperial House, and a few confidential friends, and was strictly preserved as a family secret.

At present, when Russia and Europe have been made acquainted with all the details of the *last* day of the life of this great man, His Majesty the present Emperor has deigned to think fit, for the eternal memory of his illustrious parent, also to make public the narrative of the *first* day of his Imperial career. The Emperor Nicholas stands in no need of laudatory exclamations; but history requires truth and virtuous examples. This thought will reconcile the illustrious departed to the violation of a secret which his modesty had always kept from the world!

To the present edition, now accessible for the first time to the public at large, are added the prefaces placed at the head of the two former editions, for the purpose of indicating the sources of our narrative and the history of its composition. It is, moreover, completed by the insertion of several private letters written by august members of the Imperial House, which were not made use of in the first two impressions of the work, of two or three anecdotes taken from the papers of the late General-Aide-de-Camp Count A. C. Benkendorff, and by several other details.

PREFACE

TO THE FIRST IMPRESSION

(1848).

THE memorable occurrences which signalised the period of time between the announcement of the decease of the Emperor Alexander I., of happy memory, and the evening following the 14th of December, 1825, have never yet been fully and satisfactorily described. Foreigners, in speaking of Russia, are very frequently liable to mistakes even when they *wish* to be just, and Russian writers are limited by the conditions of a censorship which is an unavoidable, but at the same time a beneficent portion of our national institutions. Moreover, in the case of political events, private individuals know, for the most part, only the external side, only the symptoms or visible surface of objects, what may be said to be presented to their own point of view alone; while in affairs of this nature the real interest is often concentrated on the secret causes of such occurrences and on the combination of *all* the facts into one common bond. Lastly, there

are details which, buried in unpublished State-papers or preserved in the personal recollections of the actors in these events, remain inaccessible to the mass of the public. From the above causes all the descriptions hitherto given to the world of the period in question either abound with errors, omissions, nay, sometimes even with intentional suppressions, or they repeat facts known to everybody, but with more or less ornaments of style and fancy. Thus, for example, the best of the foreign narratives, viz. that inserted by the celebrated Schnitzler in his work, 'Histoire intime de la Russie sous les Empereurs Alexandre et Nicolas, Paris, 1847,' contains, together with some truths, a considerable number of errors, and is in reality nothing else but an extended, though not however always exact, extract from the documents printed in 1826, in different languages, entitled, 'Report of the Criminal Commission,' which the author clothed in the form of his own narrative, and completed with a few anecdotes. On the other hand, in the best, or rather almost the only Russian work* in which this subject is spoken of in more than merely general terms, only ten small

* Historical Sketch of the Reign of His Majesty the Emperor Nicholas Pàvlovitch. By N. Ustriàloff, St. Petersburg, 1847.

pages are devoted to these events—a space corresponding perhaps to the general extent of the work, but too limited to satisfy curiosity, or rather a feeling which here deserves a more dignified appellation—*the desire for historic truth.*

In the mean time contemporaries are growing old and dying, traditions are disappearing, the very eye-witnesses find their memory of the past growing dimmer and dimmer, while the truth, itself to a certain degree disfigured in verbal recitals, is gradually becoming mixed with inventions and embellishments, which so easily cling to every great event that has much occupied men's attention.

To re-establish the facts in their purity, and at the same time to fill up, for the future historian of Russia, a blank which posterity would not pardon us for leaving, His Imperial Highness the Heir Apparent Cesarèvitch and Grand Duke Alexander Nicholàevitch was pleased, with His Majesty's permission, to entrust to the Secretary of State, Baron M. Korff, the composition, founded upon the most authentic data, of a description, as complete and detailed as possible, of the occurrences in question. This work is now terminated. It does not pretend to be a history, which is an undertaking only for posterity, but a faithful chronicle, the compilation of which

was a duty imposed upon the conscience of contemporaries. A chronicle ought to relate events, and how they occurred: it is the province of history to appreciate them and to pronounce upon them a definitive judgment.

The materials for the present work have been furnished by the following sources:—

1. A detailed memoir, written in his own hand, drawn up by His Majesty the Emperor Nicholas Pàvlovitch, for the Imperial family.

2. The recollections of His Highness the Grand Duke Michael Pàvlovitch, reduced to writing under his own immediate direction.

3. The narratives of the late Prince A. N. Galìtzin and Count M. M. Speràvskii, taken down from their own lips during their lifetime.

4. The narratives, and in some cases the written memoranda, of living eye-witnesses and actors in the events of the 14th December: General-Aides-de-Camp Count Orlòff, Count Levashòff, Count Adlerberg, Peròvskii, Kavèlin, and Philosòphoff, and General Rostòvtsoff.

5. The narratives of several other credible eye-witnesses and the reminiscences of the compiler of the present notice.

6. Papers left by the late Prince V. P. Kotchubèi.

7. The original acts of the Council of the Empire.

8. The acts of the Commission of Inquiry and Supreme Criminal Tribunal.

9. The Official Narrative of the 15th and 29th December, 1825.

10. The Complete Collection of the Laws.

The description compiled upon the above data was in all its details verified by His Imperial Highness the Grand Duke Michael Pàvlovitch, and by the greater part of the persons whose narratives were inserted in it, and ultimately corrected according to the personal instructions of His Majesty the Emperor Nicholas Pàvlovitch.

PREFACE

TO THE SECOND IMPRESSION

(1854).

In the autumn of 1848 Her Imperial Highness the Grand Duchess Olga Nicholàevna visited Russia. A short time previously the compilation of the present narrative had been terminated. The Grand Duchess, hearing of it in the Imperial family, expressed a desire to be furnished by the compiler with a copy for herself. He replied, that the only one in existence was in the possession of His Highness the Heir Apparent Cesarèvitch, and that the rough copies had been destroyed. The Grand Duchess then remarked, that, as manuscripts were liable to be easily destroyed, and still more easily to be filled, in the process of transcription by hand, with errors sometimes disfiguring the true meaning, it would be better to print the narrative, at least for the Members of the Imperial family, and for a few other confidential persons. The idea of the Grand Duchess was communicated to His Imperial Highness the

Grand Duke Heir Apparent, and, upon his report, His Majesty the Emperor Nicholas Pàvlovitch was pleased to give orders for twenty-five copies of the work to be printed, which was performed by the 14th of December, 1848.

In the course of time, partly from persons who had been honoured with the privilege of receiving copies of this little work, partly from his own researches and investigations, the compiler succeeded in collecting various fresh facts and data respecting the occurrences which he had described. Many of these new details turned out to be of no insignificant importance, and capable, moreover, of still further contributing to the attainment of the object he proposed, viz. that of leaving to posterity an account, as full and exact as possible, of events so important in the annals of his country. Out of the number of these materials, some which were collected during the life of His Imperial Highness the Grand Duke Michael Pàvlovitch of happy memory were laid before His Highness, in order to their being verified by his personal recollections; the whole was then presented to His Imperial Highness the Heir Apparent Cesarèvitch, to whose suggestion the present work owes its existence, and lastly to His Majesty the Emperor. On each of them His Majesty was

pleased to make autograph annotations, and in this manner they received the fullest amount of authentication. Besides this, among the papers of General-Field-Marshal Prince Volkònskii, many remarkable documents referring to this epoch were found after his decease in 1852, and among the rest various letters written by the Cesarèvitch Constantine Pàvlovitch of happy memory, and by the Prince himself. It was then determined to proceed to a new impression of the work. With this object the materials recently collected were distributed in their proper places, and in conformity with this re-arrangement the whole work was corrected, and in many parts completely recast. His Majesty the Emperor Nicholas Pàvlovitch deigned once more to peruse this final compilation in its complete state, and again corrected it in various passages.

The chief new materials, by which the former impression is now completed and perfected, are extracted from the following sources :—

1. An autograph contemporary memoir by Her Majesty the Empress Alexàndra Feòdorovna.

2. The papers of His Imperial Highness the Cesarèvitch Constantine Pàvlovitch and of General-Field-Marshal Prince Volkònskii.

3. The verbal and partly written communica-

tions of the following persons: the Mitropolìtan of Moscow, Philarèt; President of the Council of the Empire Prince Czernicheff; General-Aides-de-Camp Sukhozanèt, Islènieff, Guerrois and Ignàtieff; Lieutenant-General Sass, General of Infantry Golovìn, Commandant of St. Petersburg Baron Saltz, second Commandant of St. Petersburg Gretch, Hypodiàkon Prokhòr Ivànoff, and other persons.

4. The memoirs left by the late General-Aides-de-Camp Count Toll and Count Komaròvskii.

5. The documents preserved in the Archives of the Council of the Empire.

6. The documents preserved in the Staff of the Guard.

7. The contemporary journals kept by the Kammer-Fourrier.

Some materials supplemental to their preceding communications, furnished by General-Aides-de-Camp Count Orlòff, Count Adlerberg, Philosòphoff, and Rostòvtsoff.

This second impression was also limited to twenty-five printed copies.

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ACCESSION

OF

NICHOLAS I.

In Russia, and indeed throughout the rest of Europe generally, an opinion has long prevailed that the Emperor Alexander, down to the last days of his life, entertained a secret determination to abdicate the throne, and to embrace the life of a private individual. It was pretty universally believed that this project had first sprung up in his mind after the overthrow of Napoleon, when the restorer of legitimate monarchy and the pacificator of Europe, worn out with glory and greatness, disappointed in his visions of human gratitude and devotion, grew more and more self-concentrated, and, weary of earthly desires, directed all his aspirations towards another world. "The burning of Mos-"cow," said he, in 1818, to the Prussian prelate, Bishop Eilert, "has illuminated my soul, and "the decrees of God pronounced on our snow-

" covered fields of battle have filled my heart with " such an ardent warmth of faith as I have " never before experienced. It was then that I " first recognised the Almighty as He is exhi- " bited in His Holy Scripture; it was not till " then that I began to understand His will and " his laws as I understand them now, and that " was matured in me the firm determination to " devote myself and my reign to His name and " His glory." Nevertheless the desire to abdicate had sprung into existence in his mind, nay, had been confided to more than one of those who were near his person, at a period long preceding this—the apogee of his greatness. Laharpe was in possession of letters written during the first years of the reign of his former pupil. " When Provi- " dence," wrote the young Emperor to his pre- " ceptor, shall have by its blessing enabled me to " raise Russia to the degree of welfare which I " desire, the first thing I shall do will be to cast " aside the burthen of administration, and to retire " into some quiet corner of Europe, where I may " peacefully enjoy the happiness secured for my " country." The idea of abdication had appeared in the youth—nay, almost in the boyhood—of the Sovereign, during the lifetime of the Empress Catherine, and while between him and the throne still stood the previous right of

his father. We have before us a document whose contents are curious to the highest degree, as being, in all probability, the first *expressed* indication of this intention, whether it may have been at the time a mere consequence of some momentary vexation, or the fruit of a romantic and high-strung imagination, often peculiar to youth. Nor is the document in question less interesting as a testimony of that elevated tone of thought, and that tenderness of feeling, which make the character of Alexander so poetical a figure in our history. It is a letter, dated May 10, 1796, and addressed by the Emperor, then Grand Duke, and in his 18th year, to Victor Pavlovitch Kotchubéi, at that time ambassador of Russia at Constantinople, and one of the writer's most intimate friends. It is as follows :—

" Cette lettre, mon cher ami, vous sera remise
" par M. Garrick, duquel je vous ai parlé dans
" une de mes lettres précédentes ; ainsi je peux
" vous parler librement sur quantité de choses.

" Savez-vous, mon cher ami, que réellement
" cela n'est pas bien que vous ne m'instruisez sur
" rien de ce qui vous regarde, car je viens d'ap-
" prendre que vous avez demandé votre congé
" pour aller faire une cure en Italie, et que de
" là vous irez en Angleterre pour quelque temps.

" D'où vient que vous ne m'en dites rien ? Je " commence à croire que vous doutez de mon " amitié pour vous, ou que vous n'avez pas assez " de confiance en moi ; car, j'ose le dire, je la " mérite réellement par l'amitié sans bornes que " je vous porte. Ainsi, je vous en conjure, in- " struisez-moi de tout ce qui vous regarde, et " croyez que vous ne pourrez me faire un plus " grand plaisir. Au reste, je vous avoue que " je suis bien charmé de vous savoir quitte de " cette place, qui ne pouvait que vous procurer " des désagréments sans être compensée par " aucune jouissance quelconque.

" Ce M. Garrick est un très joli garçon ; il a " passé quelque temps ici, et dans ce moment il " va en Crimée, d'où il s'embarquera pour Con- " stantinople. Je le trouve bien heureux, parce " qu'il aura l'occasion de vous voir, et je lui " envie en quelque façon son sort, d'autant plus " que je ne suis nullement content du mien. Je " suis enchanté que la matière se soit engagée " d'elle-même, car j'aurais été embarrassé de " commencer ce sujet. Oui, mon cher ami, je le " répète, je ne suis nullement satisfait de ma " position : elle est beaucoup trop brillante pour " mon caractère, qui n'aime que la tranquillité " et la paix. La cour n'est pas une habitation " faite pour moi ; je souffre chaque fois que je

" dois être en représentation, et je me fais du
" mauvais sang en voyant ces bassesses qu'on
" fait à chaque instant pour acquérir une distinc-
" tion pour laquelle je n'aurais pas donné trois
" sols. Je me sens malheureux d'être obligé
" d'être en société avec des gens que je ne vou-
" drais pas avoir pour domestiques, et qui jouis-
" sent ici des premières places, tels que le P.
" S——, M. P——, le P. B——, les deux C.
" S——, M——, et un tas d'autres, qui ne méri-
" tent pas même d'être nommés, qui, hautains
" avec leurs inférieurs, rampent devant celui
" qu'ils craignent. Enfin, mon cher ami, je ne
" me sens pas du tout fait pour la place que j'oc-
" cupe dans ce moment, et encore moins pour
" celle qui m'est destinée un jour, et à laquelle
" je me suis juré de renoncer, soit d'une manière,
" soit de l'autre.

" Voilà, mon cher ami, le grand secret qu'il
" me tardait depuis si longtemps de vous com-
" muniquer, et dont je n'ai pas besoin de vous
" recommander le silence, car vous sentez que
" c'est une chose qui peut me casser la tête. J'ai
" prié M. Garrick, qu'en cas qu'il ne puisse vous
" remettre cette lettre, qu'il la brûle, et qu'il
" n'en charge personne pour vous.

" J'ai beaucoup pensé et combattu cette ma-
" tière, car il faut que je vous dise que ce projet

" m'est entré en idée avant même que je vous " aie connu, et je n'ai pas tardé à me décider " au parti que j'ai pris.

" Nos affaires sont dans un désordre incroy- " able ; on pille de tous côtés ; tous les départe- " ments sont mal administrés ; l'ordre semble " être banni de partout ; et l'Empire ne fait " qu'accroître ses domaines : ainsi comment se " peut-il qu'un seul homme puisse suffire à le gou- " verner, et, encore plus, à y corriger les abus ? " c'est absolument impossible non seulement à " un homme de capacités ordinaires comme moi, " mais même à un génie, et j'ai eu toujours pour " principe qu'il valait mieux ne pas se charger " d'une besogne, que de la remplir mal ; c'est " d'après ce principe que j'ai pris la résolution " dont je vous ai parlé ci-dessus. Mon plan est, " qu'ayant une fois renoncé à cette place si sca- " breuse (je ne peux pas fixer l'époque d'une telle " renonciation), j'irai m'établir avec ma femme " aux bords du Rhin, où je vivrai tranquille en " simple particulier, faisant consister mon bon- " heur dans la société de mes amis et l'étude de " la nature.

" Vous vous moquerez de moi ; vous direz que " c'est un projet chimérique : vous en êtes le " maître ; mais attendez l'événement, et après " cela je vous permets de juger. Je sais que

" vous me blamerez; mais je ne peux pas faire
" autrement, car le repos de ma conscience est
" ma première règle, et elle ne pourrait jamais
" rester en repos si j'entreprenais une chose au-
" dessus de mes forces. Voilà, mon cher ami,
" ce qu'il me tardait tant de vous dire; à présent
" que cela est fait, il ne me reste qu'à vous as-
" surer, qu'où que je serai, heureux ou mal-
" heureux, dans le faste ou dans la misère, une
" de mes plus grandes consolations sera votre
" amitié pour moi, et croyez que la mienne ne
" finira qu'avec ma vie.

" Adieu, mon cher et vrai ami; ce qui pour-
" rait m'arriver en attendant de plus heureux,
" cela serait de vous revoir.

" Ma femme vous dit mille choses; elle a des
" idées toutes conformes aux miennes."

Years glided on. The prince who in early youth had dreamed of a private life on the banks of the Rhine had twice crossed that river with the laurel of victory and the olive-branch of peace, and had avenged the destruction of Moscow by the preservation of Paris. Russia was blazing with the glory of her monarch; kneeling Europe was proclaiming him her saviour, her earthly providence. But amidst the splendour of all this greatness, the loftiest that was ever attained

by man, Alexander—however his vocation had been fulfilled—found no happiness upon his throne. The hope of his youth was still lurking in his heart; and he soon gave it a still more distinct expression.

It was the summer of 1819. At that time the regiments of the Guards were in camp near Krásnoe Seló,* cantoned, however, not *en masse*, as is usual at present, but in brigades. The brigade of the 1st Division of Infantry, which was commanded by the Grand Duke Nicholas Pavlovitch,† had just terminated its turn of duty. The Emperor in person was present at the parade of the corps preparatory to its departure from cantonments, expressed great satisfaction at the state of the troops, and was more than ordinarily gracious to his brother.

After the parade the Emperor dined with the Grand Duke Nicholas and the Grand Duchess Alexandra Féodorovna, consort of the latter. No other persons were present. The conversa-

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* A village about fifty versts (40 miles) from Petersburg, not far from the Imperial summer residence of Tsárskoë Seló.—*Translator.*

† This brigade (the 2nd) consisted of the Izmáilovski and Chasseur regiments, and the Battalion of Sappers of the Life-Guards.

tion, of the most friendly and affectionate character, at first passed from one indifferent subject to another, when suddenly the Emperor gave it a most unexpected turn. He began by saying that he beheld with delight the conjugal and parental happiness of the young couple,—a happiness which he had never tasted himself, in consequence of a connection of a different kind which he had formed in early youth; he added, at the same time, that the education which had been given both to himself and to his brother Constantine was far from being directed in such a manner as to render them capable of appreciating this kind of happiness, and that neither of them had any children which could with propriety be legally recognised. A monarch, continued the Emperor, sincerely desirous of conscientiously executing the constant and severe labour inseparable from the due fulfilment of the duties incumbent upon him, must feel the indispensable necessity—a necessity even more indispensable in our present century than it has ever been before—of possessing, in addition to other qualities, a large endowment of health and physical strength. In this respect he affirmed that he experienced in his own case a gradual weakening of these qualities, and that he foresaw the certainty of his being at no

distant time unable to fulfil those duties in such a way as to satisfy his own conscience. He had therefore considered it his duty to come to an irrevocable decision on the subject, and was firmly determined to abdicate the throne on the very first warning, given by a perceptible diminution of his bodily or mental energies, that the proper moment had arrived. "I have, on "more than one occasion," concluded His Majesty, "discussed the subject with my brother "Constantine; but he, being of the same age "as myself, having contracted family ties of the "same peculiar character, and being animated, "besides, with an innate and irresistible aver- "sion to the idea of reigning, has decidedly "refused to succeed me on the throne. We are "both still further confirmed in our respective "determinations by seeing in you an evident "proof of the peculiar blessing of Providence, "which has vouchsafed you a son. You are "therefore informed beforehand that you are "destined, at a future period, to be invested "with the Imperial dignity."

The young couple were struck as with a thunderbolt by this unexpected communication, which to them was full of terror. Bursting into tears, they were unable to articulate a reply.

Observing the profound agitation of the Grand

Duke and Duchess, Alexander, with that angelic kindness and delicacy which distinguished him, endeavoured to encourage and tranquillize them. "The moment for the great change "which so alarms you," he said, "is not yet "arrived; before it comes, ten years, perhaps, "will have passed over our heads, and my pre-"sent object in making this communication was "merely that you may begin betimes to habitu-"ate yourselves to the certain and inevitable "destiny which awaits you." In vain did the Grand Duke represent that he had never prepared himself to occupy the elevated rank of Emperor; that he felt within himself neither the indispensable powers for such a post, nor the necessary strength of character; that he had but one wish and ambition in the world—to pass his life in serving the Emperor with every faculty of his mind and intellect, in whatever sphere of duty His Majesty might point out, and that his desires extended no farther. The Emperor replied to this, with many expressions of affection, that he himself, at the period of his accession to the throne, had found himself in a precisely similar position; that, in addition to this, the affairs of the government had been then in a most complicated and confused state, in consequence of the absence of anything like

fundamental principles of administration; for though during the last years of the Empress Catherine's life there had incontestably been a great want of order and system, yet, nevertheless, the mechanism of government continued to go on, as it were, by its own *vis inertiæ*. From the accession, however, of their father,* in consequence of the adoption of the principle that the system hitherto followed was to be completely abandoned, even those small remains of order which still survived were annihilated without being replaced by any new system; and that therefore his (the Emperor Alexander's) position had been rendered still more embarrassing; while in the present case, after the reforms and ameliorations introduced in the course of his reign, the Grand Duke would find everything following a regular legitimate march and enjoying a proper organization, to maintain which would be his only task.

The conversation terminated. The Emperor retired, but the youthful couple felt precisely what a man might feel who, while tranquilly advancing along a level road, amid a lovely landscape, should see suddenly yawning at his feet a frightful precipice, towards which he

* The Emperor Paul.

should be irresistibly drawn by the fascination of an overpowering force, so that he could neither go forward nor turn back.* Up to that moment the Grand Duke had never been called upon to take any share whatever in the combinations of state business, nor initiated into the management of affairs connected with the higher branches of administration. Down to the year 1818 he had not so much as been charged with any duties connected with the public service, and his whole acquaintance with the world was confined to such impressions as may have been made upon his mind from his daily passing an hour or so every morning in the antechambers of the palace or in the chamber of the secretaries, amid a noisy crowd of civil and military functionaries, who were admitted into the presence of the Emperor, and who whiled away the time, till the moment of their audience, for the most part with jesting and ridicule, and not seldom with intrigues into the bargain. These hours were not, of course, entirely lost to the young man, inasmuch as they furnished him with materials for the study of human character. He constantly

* This comparison is borrowed almost *verbatim* from the autograph Memoir of the late Emperor Nicolas I. The same adoption of His Majesty's own words has been constantly followed whenever we have had occasion to express the late Emperor's personal feelings and impressions.

observed, he watched, examined, and compared both men and things, and, it must be confessed, was generally sound in his judgments. But all this must have served rather as a useful lesson for the conduct of private life than as a preparation for the throne. It was not until the autumn of 1818 that the Grand Duke was appointed commander of a brigade of the Guard; a very short time after he had entered upon the direction of the Engineer corps, the post of Inspector-General of that arm having been confided to him, in July, 1817, on the same day with the appointment of *Chef* of the battalion of Sappers of the Life-Guards. On the dignity of Emperor he looked with a feeling of awful veneration, particularly having before his eyes, in his brother, the living example of a sovereign whose whole existence was an incessant sacrifice to duty, and who, nevertheless, had so seldom succeeded in securing even gratitude, —at least from his contemporaries. And now, all of a sudden, instead of the sphere of existence traced out beforehand for the Grand Duke by the natural order of succession; instead of the zealous fulfilment of the modest duties of a subject; instead of the tranquil joys of his family felicity; there suddenly opened before him a destiny so unexpected—that of having

to bear an almost insupportable burden of tremendous responsibility to God and to his own conscience—the burden of ruling the most gigantic empire in the world!

After the conversation which we have related, the Emperor, in various interviews with the Grand Duke and Duchess, repeatedly took occasion to hint at the subject of that conversation, but without entering into details, and they, on their part, used all their efforts to avoid so painful a topic. In the mean time month after month glided away, without any visible steps being taken to put into execution the intention which had been avowed by Alexander.

On the 20th* March, 1820, as is well known, was pronounced the act of divorce between the Cesarévitch† Constantine Pávlovitch and the Grand Duchess Anna Féodorovna.‡ On the same day was promulgated a Manifest, by which was established and legalised the principle that a member of the Imperial family who should contract a marriage with a person not possessed of a corresponding dignity, *i. e.* not

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* The dates throughout the present work are according to the Old Style, still adopted in Russia: to reduce them to New Style 12 days are to be added.—*Translator.*

† The title given in Russia to the Heir Apparent to the throne. —*Translator.*

‡ Sister of the King of the Belgians, still living.—*Translator.*

belonging to any sovereign or reigning house, cannot communicate to such person the rights which belong to himself as a member of the Imperial family, and that the issue resulting from such matrimonial union have no right to the succession to the throne. As if in order to disclose to the world the secret aim which was intended by the promulgation of the Manifest, the Cesarévitch contracted a marriage on the 12th of May of that year with the Countess Johanna Grudzinska, Princess Lovitzka.* And even prior to this time—as we have seen from the Emperor Alexander's own words — the Cesarévitch had declined to accept the Imperial crown; yet even if there had been still remaining any vacillation on his part, the fundamental and universally-known law by which his wife and their possible issue were excluded from the rights belonging to membership of the Imperial family might—nay, must—have confirmed him in his determination; at all events, he very soon opened himself on the subject to that individual among his younger brothers for whom he entertained a peculiarly warm and affectionate friendship.

After suffering from a severe illness, the

* A Polish lady.—*Translator.*

Grand Duke Michael Pávlovitch was advised to drink the waters of Carlsbad and Marienbad during the summer months of 1821. On his return to Russia, he visited Warsaw, the constant residence of the Cesarévitch. At that city, and at the same time, was expected the Grand Duke Nicolas Pávlovitch, with his Grand Duchess, then returning from the baths of Ems. During the preparations which were being made for the latter personages, the Cesarévitch one day said to his brother, "You see, Michel," so he was in the habit of calling him, "with you "we make ourselves quite at home, without "ceremony; but when I expect my brother "Nicolas, I always feel as if I were preparing "to meet the Emperor himself!" These words, pronounced, as it were, incidentally, were only the introduction to a more important revelation. One day the two brothers were taking a drive together in an open carriage. "You know my "confidence in you, my dear fellow," suddenly exclaimed the Cesarévitch; "I am now going "to give you a still greater proof of it by "intrusting you with a great secret which is "weighing upon my mind. God grant that we "may not live to witness the greatest misfor- "tune that can happen to Russia—the loss of "the Emperor; but I must tell you that, if it is

" the will of fate that this blow should fall on
" us before my death, I have solemnly vowed
" in my own mind to renounce the crown irre-
" vocably and for ever. I have two principal
" motives for doing this. In the first place, I
" so love, respect, and honour my brother Alex-
" ander, that I am filled with grief—nay, with
" horror—at the mere idea of occupying his
" place; in the second place, my wife does not be-
" long to any sovereign house, and, what is still
" more important, she is a Pole; consequently
" the nation could not possibly feel the necessary
" confidence in me, and our mutual relations
" would always be equivocal. Therefore I have
" solemnly determined to give up my right to
" my brother Nicolas, and nothing can ever
" shake this my well-considered decision. In
" the mean time it must remain a secret between
" ourselves; but if ever my brother Nicholas
" should speak to you on this subject, assure
" him, in my name, that I will be his faithful
" and zealous servant to the grave, wherever he
" pleases to employ me; and, if he should die in
" my lifetime, that I will serve his son with the
" same zeal, perhaps even with more, because
" he bears the name of my benefactor."

A few days after this conversation Nicholas Pàvlovitch arrived at Warsaw. The Cesaré-

vitch received this new guest with his usual kindness and hospitality, but often reduced him to the greatest embarrassment by signs of honour and ceremonial respect which did not correspond to his rank. The Grand Duke tried every expedient to escape from these testimonies of deference, and begged to be relieved from a degree of respect which sometimes almost took the form of extravagance and caricature; but the elder brother excused himself by saying, jestingly, "This is all because you are Tsar of "Mirlikii,"—a sort of nickname which he, from that time forward, began to employ frequently in speaking of Nicholas Pávlovitch.*

In the following winter of 1821-22, after the manœuvres of the troops near the village of Beshenkóvitchi, on which occasion the whole corps of the Guard was present, political considerations rendered it advisable to keep this corps in the Western Governments. With it, at the head of their brigades, remained also the two youngest Grand Dukes. At the new year, however, they arrived in Petersburg, whither

* It should be remembered that the Saint Nicholas, after whom the Grand Duke Nicholas Pávlovitch was named at his baptism, bears in the Greek hagiology the title of the Wonder-worker of Mirlikia, from the town in which he was bishop, and the province in which the town is situated, *Mira* in *Lycia*.

also came the Cesarévitch from Warsaw, and the Grand Duchess Mária Pávlovna* from Weimar, so that almost the whole Imperial family was then assembled in the capital.

It must have been at this period that the great historical event which so profoundly influenced the future destinies of Russia was completed, or, at all events, received its final arrangement.

The Cesarévitch, when he visited Petersburg, was always in the habit of residing at the Marble Palace, now the abode of the Grand Duke Constantine Nicholaevitch, and which was his own property; and after supping *en famille* with the Empress-Mother † he was accustomed, about ten o'clock, to carry home with him his youngest brother, with whom he sometimes passed part of the night in conversation. One evening in the month of January, 1822, Michael Pávlovitch was waiting in his own apartments ‡ for the appearance of the Empress in the supper-room;

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* The Emperor Paul had four sons—Alexander, Constantine, Nicholas, and Michael; and five daughters—Maria, Alexandra, Catherine, Duchess of Oldenburg and afterwards Queen of Würtemberg, Helen, and Anna, now Dowager Queen of the Netherlands.—*Translator.*

† Maria Fèodorovna.

‡ In the Winter Palace. At that time the Grand Duke Nicholas Pávlovitch had established himself in a separate residence in his own palace at the Anítchkin Bridge, and therefore supped with the Empress only on particular occasions.

but ten o'clock struck, and then eleven, without the usual announcement: at last between eleven and twelve he was sent for. Along with the Empress he found only the Cesarévitch and the Grand Duchess Mária Pávlovna, and on entering the room he perceived that the Grand Duchess was embracing her brother, with the exclamation: "Vous êtes un honnête homme, mon frère!" On the arrival of the Grand Duke nothing more was said, and the supper passed in conversation on indifferent subjects. On rising from table, the Cesarèvitch, as usual, carried Michael Pávlovitch to the Marble Palace.

"Do you remember our conversation at Warsaw?" was his first question, as soon as they had got into their sledge. "This evening "the whole thing has been arranged. I de- "finitively repeated to the Emperor and our "mother my intentions and my inflexible deter- "mination. They understood and appreciated "my way of thinking. The Emperor promised "to draw up a particular act upon the whole "affair, and to place it with the other state- "papers which are preserved on the altar of the "Cathedral of the Assumption at Moscow; but "this act is to be kept a profound secret, and "made public only when the necessary moment "arrives."

In consequence of this decisive explanation the Casarévitch lost no time in as it were *officially* laying the foundation of the affair, in a letter to the Emperor Alexander, dated the 14th of January, 1822. The rough copy of this letter was first submitted to the opinion of His Majesty himself, and even corrected in many places by his own hand. This important document stands as follows, the corrections made by Alexander being also indicated :*—

"Most Gracious Sovereign!

"Confiding from long experience in the "unbounded kindness of Your Majesty's dis- "position, I am emboldened once more to "throw myself upon *that kindness*,† and to lay "at your august feet, Most Gracious Sovereign, "a humble petition.

"Not feeling myself endowed either with "the talents, the powers, or the energy "indispensable for one who may one day be "elevated to that dignity to which my birth "may give me a right, I venture ‡ to entreat "Your Imperial Majesty to transfer that right

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* All the corrections made in this document by the Emperor Alexander are indicated by italics.

† In the rough copy, "to throw myself *upon it*."

‡ In the rough copy, "I venture *with the deepest humility*."

" to him to whom it would fall next in suc-
" cession to myself, and by this transfer to
" establish for ever a firm foundation for our
" empire. By so doing *I may add** yet a new
" pledge and new force to that solemn engage-
" ment† which I *voluntarily and deliberately*
" took on the occasion of my separation from my
" first wife. Every circumstance connected with
" my present position is an additional motive
" urging me *to this*,‡ and will be in the eyes
" of our Empire and of the world a fresh
" *evidence of the sincerity of my feelings*.§

" Most Gracious Sovereign! Look favourably
" upon my prayer; entreat the consent and
" concurrence of *our*‖ August Mother, and
" confirm it with the approbation of your
" Imperial lips. I shall never cease to strive,
" in retiring into private life, to show myself
" an example to Your Majesty's most faithful
" subjects and to the most dutiful sons of our
" beloved country."

Nevertheless, notwithstanding what had taken

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* In the rough copy, " by so doing *I may give*."

† In the rough copy, "*voluntarily taken by me*."

‡ In the rough copy, "urging me *to do so*."

§ These words occupy the place of the following expression used in the rough copy:—"A proof and new pledge of my voluntarily-given and unforced consent, then solemnly recorded."

‖ In the rough copy, "*my*."

place, Alexander still hesitated respecting the final determination of the affair. His reply to the letter just quoted was not despatched till after the interval of a fortnight, viz. not till the 2nd of February. In his letter to the Cesarèvitch, written with his own hand, are the following expressions :—

"Beloved Brother! I have read your letter " with the attention it deserved. Knowing as " I do how to appreciate the elevated sentiments " of your excellent heart, this communication " was far from surprising me. It has given " me a new proof of your sincere attachment to " the welfare of the Empire, and of your care " for its stability and its happiness.

" In accordance with your desire I communi- " cated your letter to our beloved and venerated " mother. She read it with the very same " feelings with which I had done, with a strong " sentiment of gratitude for the honourable " motives which urged you to write it.

" It therefore remains to herself as well as to " me, taking into consideration those motives, " therein insisted on by you, to leave you fully " at liberty to execute your irrevocable deter- " mination, and to implore at the same time " Almighty God to bless the consequences of " such generous and disinterested intentions."

With this the affair ended. Nicholas Pávlovitch and his wife *remained in complete ignorance* of what had taken place. From that time forward, however, the Empress Mária Feódorovna, in the course of conversation with them, began to throw out frequent hints in accordance with the purport of what the Emperor had communicated to them, and even indirectly insinuated the existence of a certain act of renunciation which had been executed in their favour, and inquiring whether His Majesty had not shown them some document of importance. All the other members of the Imperial family preserved a profound silence on the subject; indeed it may be doubted whether any one of them, with the exception of the Grand Duchess Mária Pávlovna, really possessed any definite information on the matter.

But it was impossible by mere letters exchanged between the members of the family to annul a fundamental law of the Empire. To give to the arrangements proposed in them the full and obligatory force of an organic law of this kind there was still absolutely required a formal act of government, an act the execution of which the Emperor had verbally promised to the Cesarévitch, but to which he had made no allusion in his letter. Alexander showed

still the very reverse of precipitation in the management of this business. The act itself was not drawn up till a period considerably later than the time of which we are now speaking; and then it was involved in impenetrable secresy. The sole depositaries of the mystery were three persons selected by Alexander himself—the Count Araktchéeff,* Prince Galitzin,† and, in addition to them, the individual to whom His Majesty thought proper to intrust the actual drawing up of the state-paper itself.

In the summer of 1823 Philarèt, Archbishop of Moscow (subsequently Mitropolitan), having occasion to visit Petersburg in order to be present at the deliberations of the Synod, demanded a temporary leave of absence for the purpose of visiting his see. Prince Galitzin, in his quality of Minister of Ecclesiastical

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* Count Alexéi Andréevitch. In his *official* or ostensible character he was at that period President of the War Department of the Council of the Empire, and General-in-Chief of the Military Colonies, but, *in reality*, the confidential adviser and intimate friend of the Emperor in all state affairs. He died in 1834, at which time he was not filling any active post under Government, but invested with the rank of Member of the Council, and *Chef* of the Grenadier Regiment which bore his name.

† Prince Alexander Nicholáevitch, then Minister of Ecclesiastical Affairs, afterwards Director-General of the Post-Office Department. At a still later period, having been afflicted with the loss of sight, he quitted the public service, retaining only the designation of Member of the Council of the Empire, and died in 1844 at his estate on the southern shore of the Crimea.

Affairs, replied to this request by informing him, *openly*, of the Emperor's permission to do so, but at the same time gave him to understand, *secretly*, that His Majesty wished him to execute, before his departure from Petersburg, a particular commission which was to be confided to him. In consequence of this order the prelate was intrusted with the original letter from the Cesarèvitch dated in 1822, and he was commanded to compose the rough draft of a Manifest* transferring the succession to the Grand Duke Nicholas Pávlovitch. At the same time it was ordered that this act, which was to remain a profound secret till the moment should arrive for putting it into execution, should be preserved in the Cathedral of the Assumption at Moscow, together with other important state-papers. The idea of secresy, as soon as it presented itself to Philarèt's mind, gave birth to the following dilemma: how would it be

* Up to that time the duty of drawing up important state-papers was confided to Michael Michâelovitch Speranskii, who at this period was a second time (from 1821) close to the person and high in the favour of the Emperor. Why then, it may be asked, was the composition of *this* particular manifest entrusted to Archbishop Philarèt, who had never before been employed in business of this nature? Was it not evidently done with the motive of destroying all suspicion as to the political importance of the affair, even in case it should transpire among the public that the drawing up of some secret paper had been confided to a person not in the habit of performing duties of this kind, and an ecclesiastic into the bargain?

possible, when the event of a new accession should occur, an event which in all human probability would take place in Petersburg, to render this conformable to a Manifest preserved in the greatest secresy at Moscow? The prelate did not conceal his doubts on this point from the Emperor, who, struck with the justice of the objection, commanded that copies of the document should be preserved also at Petersburg, in the Council of the Empire, in the Synod, and in the Senate, an arrangement which was specified in the draft of the act itself. Having placed the paper in the hands of Prince Galitzin, Philarèt, as if having already received his leave of absence to return to Moscow, begged permission to pay his respects to the Emperor on his departure, and was admitted to an audience of His Majesty at Kámennoi Ostroff; but at the same time he received orders to wait till the projected draft was returned to him, for the purpose of receiving some farther corrections. The Emperor left for Tsárskoe Seló. Several days passed. Philarèt, anxious about the faithful guardianship of the secret which had been intrusted to him, and hearing that the continuance of his stay at Petersburg, when it had long been publicly known that he had received permission to return to Moscow, was beginning

to excite inquisitive curiosity, begged permission to execute the Emperor's order by passing through Tsárskoe Seló, where he might stop without exciting comment under pretext of visiting Prince Galitzin. This request was granted. Philarèt found the draft returned from the Emperor and in the Prince's hands; several words and phrases in it had been erased; endeavouring to divine why these had not corresponded with the ideas of His Majesty, the prelate hastened to replace them by others.

The Manifest, as it came from the pen of Archbishop Philarèt, was as follows:—

"We, by Divine permission, Alexander the "First, Emperor and Autocrat of All the Rus- "sias, etc. etc. etc. To all our faithful and "loving subjects, greeting. From the time of "our first accession to the throne of All the "Russias, we have felt ourselves solemnly bound "before Almighty God, not only during our "life to watch over and foster the welfare of our "well-beloved country and people, but no less "to prepare and secure beforehand their tran- "quillity and happiness, against the time when "we shall be no more, by means of a clear and "precise indication of our successor in con- "formity with the rights of our Imperial house,

" and with the interests of the Empire. We " have not been able, as our predecessors have " done, to fix upon our successor by name, inas- " much as we have remained in expectation of " its perhaps being decreed in the unsearchable " councils of God to bless us with an heir to the " throne in the direct line of succession. But " the more our days are prolonged the more " desirous do we become of placing our throne " in such a position that it may not even for a " moment remain vacant.

" While our heart has been filled with anxiety " to perform this sacred duty, our beloved " brother, the Cesarèvitch and Grand Duke " Constantine Pávlovitch, urged thereto by his " own free and voluntary inclination, has laid " before us a petition, entreating that the right " to that dignity to which he might one day be " raised by the privilege of his birth may be " transferred to that person to whom it would " naturally belong after himself. He at the " same time announced his intention to give in " this way new force and validity to the Sup- " plementary Act for Regulating the Succession " to the Throne, drawn up by us in the year " 1820, and by him, in so far as it relates to " him, willingly and solemnly recognised.

" We are profoundly touched by the gene-

" rosity with which our beloved brother, with
" such forgetfulness of all selfish considerations,
" determined on this sacrifice in order to fortify
" the family constitution of Our Imperial House,
" and for the unshaken tranquillity of the
" Russian Empire.

" After imploring the Divine assistance, and
" after mature reflection upon a matter so near
" our heart, and so momentous to the state, and
" finding that the existing regulations respecting
" the order of succession to the throne do not
" deprive those possessing a right to that suc-
" cession of full liberty to renounce their right
" in such circumstances as present no prospec-
" tive difficulty in the future succession of the
" throne—with the consent of our august Mother,
" and in conformity with our own supreme here-
" ditary privilege as head of the Imperial family,
" and by the supreme autocratic power given us
" by God, we have decreed: *Firstly*, that the
" free and voluntary renunciation, by our second
" brother Constantine Pávlovitch, of his right
" to the throne of All the Russias shall be
" maintained firm and irrevocable; and that
" the act of this renunciation, in order to its
" necessary publicity, shall be preserved in the
" Cathedral of the Assumption at Moscow, and
" in the three supreme jurisdictions of our

" empire, that is to say, in the Most Holy " Synod, in the Council of the Empire, and in " the Governing Senate; and *Secondly*, that in " consequence of this renunciation, and in exact " conformity with the Act of Succession, the " rights of Heir Apparent and successor to " Ourselves shall be transferred to our second " brother, the Grand Duke Nicholas Pávlovitch.

" After this we remain in full and confident " conviction that on that day when it shall " please the King of Kings to call us, according " to the universal law of all mortals, from this " earthly crown into eternity, all classes of sub- " jects in the state, to whom this our present irre- " vocable will and command, and this our lawful " decree shall, at the proper time, and by the dis- " positions we may think fit to make, be known " and publicly promulgated, shall without delay " take the oath of fidelity and allegiance to the " person hereinbefore named and appointed by " us as hereditary Emperor and Sovereign of " the one and indivisible throne of the Empire " of All the Russias, the Kingdom of Poland, " and the Principality of Finland. And on our " own part we earnestly entreat all our faithful " subjects that, with the same love with which " we have ever accounted it our highest earthly " happiness to protect and foster their welfare,

"they offer up their ardent prayers to our Lord
" and Saviour Jesus Christ to receive our soul,
" after His unspeakable mercy, into His eternal
" kingdom."

On the 25th of August, in the same year [1823], the Emperor Alexander arrived at Moscow, and on the 27th he sent to the Archbishop the Manifest of which we have been speaking, signed at Tsárskoe Seló on the 16th of the same month. It was enclosed in a sealed envelope, with the following superscription in the Emperor's own handwriting: " To be preserved in " the Cathedral of the Assumption, with the other " state-papers, till demanded by myself; and in " case of my decease, to be opened by the Dio- " cesan of the See of Moscow and the General- " Governor of Moscow in the Cathedral of the " Assumption, before taking any other steps." On the following day the Archbishop was visited by Count Araktchéeff, who, after inquiring whether the prelate had received any particular papers, farther demanded, how they were to be carried into the Cathedral? Philarèt replied, that on the 29th, which was the eve of

the Emperor's name's-day,* he should celebrate in person a vesper-service in the church of the Assumption, and that, when entering the sanctuary,† according to the routine of service, before the commencement of the ceremony, he would profit by the opportunity to place the envelope in the Ark ‡ with the other documents deposited there, but without revealing to anybody that he had done so. His idea was, that at least the few persons who would be present in the sanctuary would remark that some fresh document, of whose contents they were ignorant, had been added to the state-papers already deposited there, and that the circumstance might give rise, in the event of the Emperor's decease, to a feeling of curiosity which might draw their attention to the ark, and lead them to enquire whether that repository might not contain something relative to such an event? Araktchéeff made no reply, and took his departure, but soon after returned with a message from the Emperor, expressing His Majesty's

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* In Russia, besides the birthday, it is the custom to celebrate the Saint's or Name's day of public and private persons.—*Translator.*

† The altar of the Greek Church is placed behind a lofty screen, called *ikonostasis* (place of the images), which is pierced by three doors, the central or "royal" gate being opened at particular parts of the service.—*Translator.*

‡ A receptacle under the altar.—*Translator.*

desire that the affair should take place without the slightest possibility of any suspicion or publicity being excited. In consequence of this decision, on the 29th August, when there was no one in the church except the Archpriest, the Sakellarii,* and the Procurator of the Synodal Board with the official seal, the Archbishop entered the Sanctuary, showed them the seal, but without exhibiting the superscription of the packet, placed it in the ark, which he closed and sealed up, and then informed all the three witnesses, under pain of disobeying the strict orders of the Emperor, that they were forbidden to reveal to any person whatever the circumstance which had taken place. He did not the least doubt but that the existence of the Manifest must be known at least to Prince Dmitrii Vladímirovitch Galitzin, to whom, in his quality of Military General-Governor of Moscow, authority was given, by the superscription on the cover of the packet, to open it when the moment for so doing should arrive; but at the same time he did not venture to hold any communication on the subject with the Prince, not having received any permission to that effect. It afterwards turned out that the General-Governor

* A functionary whose duty it is to take care of the images, relics, vestments, &c., deposited in the vestiary of the church.—*Translator.*

had received no directions whatever about the new Act which had just been deposited with the others in the Cathedral of the Assumption; and that he first heard of it after the death of the Emperor Alexander from the mouth of Philarèt himself.

After the signature of the Act, and the deposition of the original in the Cathedral of the Assumption, copies of it were sent to the Council of the Empire, to the Synod, and to the Senate —not, however, immediately, but after a considerable interval of time. Thus, for example, the Council of the Empire did not receive the copy of the Manifest, which had received the Sign-Manual on the 16th August, till the 15th October. All these copies, as well as the original, were transcribed by Prince A. N. Galitzin, and sent to their destination in covers under the Imperial seal. On the packet transmitted to the Council the Emperor wrote with his own hand the following superscription: "To be kept " in the Council of the Empire until demanded " back by myself; and in case of my decease, to " be opened, before any other steps are taken, " in an extraordinary meeting of the Council." Precisely similar inscriptions, likewise in the Emperor's handwriting, were placed upon the two other envelopes. The distribution, how-

ever, of these copies of the Manifest to different public offices in Petersburg, and their official reception in the various chanceries, could not remain so much a secret as the depositing of the original at Moscow; but the contents of the packets, in which, to borrow the eloquent expression of Archbishop Philarèt, "had been preserved, as in a tomb, the Imperial secret involving the existence of the empire," * were known only to three chosen confidants. The public, even the highest dignitaries, remained in complete ignorance: people lost themselves in a labyrinth of conjectures, guesses, and suppositions; but found it impossible to arrive at anything certain. For a considerable time the mysterious packets furnished a subject for hypothesis and conversation, till at last the subject, after going the round of the capital, underwent the common lot of all things; people left off thinking and talking about it. The affair of the Manifest was completely unknown even to him whose fate was to be decided by it. The secret was absolutely unrevealed.

Upon an attentive consideration of the events which we have been relating, a series of ques-

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* A sermon, delivered in the Cathedral of the Assumption on the 18th of December, 1825.

tions will inevitably suggest themselves, whose solution can now be only based upon mere deductions more or less probable; the true key to these problems has perished with the individuals who were the actors in these proceedings. The letter of the Cesarévitch containing his renunciation of the throne, and the Emperor's reply, were written at the very beginning of the year 1822, while the Manifest, transforming a family correspondence into the authority of a law, was not drawn up until the latter half of the year 1823. What was the cause of this delay? If we may judge by the sentiments of friendship which Alexander entertained for his brother's second wife, we may conjecture that the Emperor wished first of all to satisfy himself personally of her adherence to the wishes of the Cesarévitch; but he had had the opportunity of seeing her, at Warsaw, in the autumn of the same year, 1822, while the Manifest was not signed till a twelvemonth had elapsed. The solution, consequently, of this *first* question, as well as the causes of the delay which took place in the transmission of the copies of the Manifest to the different places where they were deposited, we can only look for in the personal peculiarities of Alexander, and in the individual idiosyncrasies of his character. We know that one of the

proverbs that he was most frequently in the habit of employing, and by which he often regulated his conduct, was, "Measure ten times, "and cut once!" *

The next question is the following: Why was it that, when in making a change in the order of succession no obstacle seemed to oppose an immediate promulgation of an act involving a legal exercise of the supreme autocratic power, and when on the other hand the deferring of its publication to the period of a demise of the throne might menace the state with serious disturbances, was it preferred to envelop the whole affair in profound mystery? The long-entertained intention of the Emperor to abdicate the throne during his life could have exerted no influence in this case, not only because the

* Corresponding to the English adages, "The more haste the worse speed," "Look before you leap," &c. It was apparently in the above manner that the Cesarévitch himself explained the delay in question. In his "Solemn Communication to my beloved Countrymen," which will be mentioned in its proper place, the Grand Duke wrote as follows:—"Obeying the elevated sentiments of his heart, and in his unsleeping care for the welfare of Russia, His Majesty the Emperor, though he had honoured me with an Imperial Rescript in his own handwriting, dated 2nd February, 1822, in which he deigned to express his approbation of my design and of the determination at which I had arrived, yet during a considerable lapse of time left this important affair without bringing it to any final execution by means of any legislative act, which was not sent until 18 months and 12 days later to the Council of the Empire and the Governing Senate, under date 16th August, 1823."

execution of that intention had remained uninterruptedly in the power of an autocratic sovereign, but also because the Manifest thus buried in secrecy deferred the investment of Nicholas Pávlovitch with hereditary rights to the succession, not till the period of any possible abdication, but, in the words of the document itself, till *the day* "when the King of Kings should call "the Emperor Alexander from this mortal life "to eternity." We must therefore seek the solution of the *second* problem as well as of the first in the peculiar state of mind in which the Emperor had then been, and in the train of reflection which he had followed; in some degree, also, perhaps to the danger—a danger which might have been gathered from previous conversations—that the third brother might also decline, as the elder had done, to undertake the burthen of administration. Whether from these or other motives, the fact is certain that a conviction of the indispensable necessity of secrecy never quitted Alexander to the day of his death. Not long before the journey which the Emperor had determined to take, in the autumn of 1825, to Taganròg, His Majesty found it necessary to examine and arrange his papers. This operation was performed by Prince A. N. Galitzin, in the Emperor's cabinet, and always in His Ma-

jesty's presence. One day, in the course of familiar conversation during the performance of this work, Galitzin, after expressing a confident hope that the Emperor would return to the capital in perfect health, ventured, nevertheless, to remark, how inconvenient it would be that the acts changing the order of the succession to the throne should remain, during so prolonged an absence, unpromulgated; and what serious danger might arise from such a circumstance in the event of an unexpected calamity. Alexander for the first few instants seemed struck with the justice of Galitzin's remark, but after an instant's silence he pointed towards heaven and quietly said, "Remettons-nous en à Dieu: "Il saura mieux ordonner les choses que nous "autres faibles mortels!" We now come, lastly, to the *third* question: Were the words inscribed on the packets, "To be kept *till demanded back by* "*myself*," written with a view to a single and eventually possible change in the person of the Heir Apparent, or are they to be regarded as in connection with the Emperor's former determination of abdicating the throne while alive? The latter supposition may possibly be nearer the truth; at all events it is satisfactorily established that Alexander was incessantly recurring to expressions having that tendency. Nearly

two years after the signature of the Manifest, in the summer of 1825, arrived in Petersburg the Prince of Orange,* who was united by a peculiarly close friendship with Nicholas Pávlovitch. To him also did the Emperor confide his desire to quit the throne. The Prince was filled with horror. With all the outburst of enthusiasm of an ardent and generous heart, he endeavoured to demonstrate, first in words and afterwards even in writing, how ruinous for Russia would be the execution of such a plan, and what odious interpretations might arise from such a measure, through the almost universal tendency of the world to explain every step exclusively in the unfavourable sense. Alexander listened courteously to all these exclamations—but remained immovable. . . . Destiny, however, was soon to decide otherwise!

On the 30th of August, 1825, on his name's-day, Alexander visited, as he was in the habit of doing, the Monastery of Alexander Névskii.†

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* Afterwards King of the Netherlands, under the name of William II.; he died in 1849.

† At the extremity of the Névskii Perspective. This large and wealthy convent was founded in honour of Prince Alexander, sur-

He was attended, both in going and returning, by the Grand Duke Nicholas Pávlovitch. The Emperor was gloomy, but nevertheless particularly kind and affectionate to his brother, whom he informed that he had been thinking of purchasing for him Mme. Miàtleff's country-house,* but had been deterred from doing so by the exorbitantly high price demanded for it, and that he would grant him, in accordance with his request, another piece of ground, also in the neighbourhood of Peterhoff.† Not a single word in the course of this conversation contained the slightest allusion to the subject which had been discussed in 1819. On the same day was performed the ceremony of blessing‡ the newly-terminated palace of the Grand Duke Michael Pávlovitch, which was followed by a dinner. It was here that Nicholas Pávlovitch, who was to set off, the same evening, on an inspection

named Névskii, from a victory obtained over the Swedes on the present site of Petersburg. The piety and patriotic services of Alexander caused him to be canonized by the Greek Church. His tomb in the monastery is an object of veneration to the Russians, and the Emperor Alexander, having been christened after him, was peculiarly under his protection.—*Translator.*

* Známenskoe, near Peterhoff.

† Now Alexandria, at Peterhoff, the summer residence of the Empress Dowager.

‡ On entering a new house, it is the custom in Russia to have the dwelling blessed by the priest and sprinkled with holy water.—*Translator.*

of the troops at Bobrúisk, bade farewell for the last time to him for whom he ever cherished a sentiment of the deepest and most affectionate gratitude, and also to the Empress Elizabeth Alexéevna. Michael Pávlovitch on his part set off for Warsaw, to which city he made frequent journeys, to visit the Cesarévitch.

On the 1st of September, at a little after four o'clock in the morning, the Emperor a second time visited the Névskii Monastery; but on this occasion absolutely alone. He caused prayers for a blessing upon his journey to be offered up at the shrine of the holy saint, paid a visit to the Mitropolìtan Seraphìm, and then, retiring to the cell of the *skhímnik** Alexéi, who had rendered himself so celebrated for the ascetic mortifications of his life, he conversed with him for a considerable time. At half-past five the Emperor started, direct from the Monastery, on his journey to Taganròg.....

At Warsaw, towards the middle of November, those who were near the person of the Cesarè-

* *Skhímnik* (from the Greek word σχημα, a peculiar dress) is a monk who retires from the world generally into his cell, where he remains without seeing or speaking to any one for a longer or shorter period: some of these ascetics continue this species of mortification till their death.—*Translator*.

vitch Constantine began to remark that he was not in his ordinary state of good spirits, and had become extremely gloomy. He even sometimes absented himself from the dinner-table, and replied to his brother's inquiries by saying that he did not feel quite well. Several days more passed, and Michael Pávlovitch remarked, by noticing the daily reports of the commandant, that two or three *feld-jägers* * had arrived from Taganròg, one almost, so to say, upon the back of the other. "What does this mean?" he asked. "Nothing important," replied the Cesarèvitch, with an air of indifference; "the "Emperor has confirmed some rewards which "I have been requesting him to confer upon "several functionaries of the Court on occasion "of his last visit here." As if in proof of the correctness of this explanation, on the following day the persons who had received recompenses presented themselves to acknowledge them; but the Cesarèvitch appeared to grow still more melancholy, still more overwhelmed. On the 25th he again did not leave his apartments to appear at table, and the Grand Duke, after dining with Princess Lovitzkii, lay down to take a short nap. Suddenly he was awakened

* Military couriers, forming a special corps.—*Translator.*

by the Cesarèvitch. "Prepare yourself," said the latter, "to hear of a dreadful misfortune!" "What is the matter? Has anything happened "to my Mother?" "No, thank God! but we, "all Russia, are visited by that terrible affliction "which I have ever dreaded more than any- "thing else. We have lost our benefactor—the "Emperor is no more!" . . . . It was not till then that the cause of the Cesarèvitch's mysterious melancholy was discovered. From the first days of the Emperor's illness, which, according to the reports brought by the last feld-jägers, had taken a most alarming turn, he had known of it, and had borne buried in his heart the tortures of foreboding and suspense. When the news arrived that the great spirit of Alexander was soaring into the precincts of another world, neither Princess Lovitzkii nor Michael Pávlovitch so much as suspected the cause of his affliction.

The deceased Emperor did not reveal the secret of his testamentary disposition of the succession, even on his death-bed. At the moment of his demise, out of the three confidential dignitaries who had accompanied him to Taganròg — General-Aide-de-Camp Prince Volkònskii, Baron Diebitch (Chief of the Staff), and Czernicheff—not one was aware that the right of

the elder brother to the succession of the crown had been transferred to the second. In the same complete ignorance was the Empress Elizabeth Alexéevna herself. On being requested by Volkònskii to state whether the Emperor had left any declaration of his last wishes, she replied that *she knew of nothing precise*, and advised that application should be made at Warsaw. The idea then suggested itself; might not something be discovered in the little packet which, as was well known to those who were about the Emperor's person, the late sovereign had always carried with him. At the request of Volkònskii the little packet was opened by the Empress in his presence, but it was found to contain nothing but two prayers and references to several chapters of the Holy Scriptures.* Then Volkònskii and Diebitch considered it their duty to despatch their report of the decease of Alexander —on that very day the 19th of November—to Warsaw, to Constantine Pávlovitch, as to the person who was now, in conformity with the law of succession of 1797, Emperor of All the Russias. As soon as this was done, Diebitch

* The Empress Elizabeth Alexéevna had at first wished to preserve this little paper in her own possession, but she afterwards ordered Volkònskii to put it into the uniform in which was clothed the body of the departed Emperor, in the very same pocket where he had been in the habit of carrying it.

addressed a letter on the same subject to Petersburg, to the Empress Mária Feódorovna, adding that "he was respectfully awaiting the "commands of the new lawful sovereign, the "Emperor Constantine Pávlovitch."

The fatal intelligence reached Warsaw at seven o'clock in the evening. The Cesarèvitch gave vent to the first outburst of his grief in the embraces of his brother and his wife, and then sent for the functionaries whose duties were immediately about his person. "Now," said he to Michael Pávlovitch, "has arrived "the solemn moment for me to prove that all "my former line of conduct was not a mask, "and to terminate the affair with the same firm- "ness with which it was begun. In my plans, "in my determination, no change whatever has "taken place, and my intention of renouncing "the throne is more immutable than ever."

Among the persons called together on this occasion, the first who presented himself was Nicholas Nicholáevitch Novossíltzoff, now attached to the service of the Cesarèvitch, but who had previously been near the person of the Emperor Alexander. Constantine Pávlovitch informed him of the loss which Russia had just experienced. "And what are now the com- "mands of Your Majesty?" asked Novossíltzoff,

after the first ejaculations of sorrow and surprise. "I beg you will not give me that title, which does "not belong to me," exclaimed the Cesarèvitch, and then related how, several years before, he had renounced the right of succession to the throne in favour of his brother. As the conversation continued, Novòssíltsoff a second time made use of the Imperial title. "Once for all," exclaimed the Cesarèvitch, with an accent of evident displeasure, "once for all, I must beg "you to have done with that, and to remember "that now our lawful sovereign and Emperor "is Nicholas Pávlovitch!" By degrees the other functionaries began to assemble. Then the Cesarèvitch read to them the previously-quoted correspondence between himself and the Emperor Alexander of the year 1822, and ordered them to begin, without delay, to prepare, in conformity with it, letters to the Empress-Mother, announcing that he, following the spirit of the Emperor Alexander's rescript of the 2nd February, 1822, had renounced his right to the throne;* and at the same time, communications

* Of course in the spirit of *this* rescript alone; for it is extremely remarkable that even the Cesarèvitch knew nothing about the existence of the Manifest of 1823. Independently of all the circumstances and documents adduced farther on, this fact is demonstrated even by the expression contained in the letter of the Grand Duke, of 1825, which asserts that "*he voluntarily yields* his right of succession

for Prince Volkònskii and Baron Diebitch. This work occupied the whole night, and it was not till past four o'clock in the morning that the Cesarèvitch could retire to repose. "I have "fulfilled my vow and done my duty," said he to Michael Pávlovitch: "my sorrow for the "loss of our benefactor will be eternal; but, at "all events, my conscience is clear before his "sacred memory and before my own heart. "You understand that no power on earth can "now shake my resolution; and in order still "further to convince my mother and my brother "that this is the case, and to destroy the last "traces of hesitation in their minds, you shall "yourself carry them my letter. Be ready to "set off this very day for Petersburg." The Cesarèvitch's wish was obeyed; on the 26th, after dinner, the Grand Duke started on his journey with the letters confided to his charge. Their contents were as follows:—*

"MOST GRACIOUS MADAM,

"MY BELOVED MOTHER!

"With a heart overwhelmed with sorrow

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to Nicholas Pávlovitch," which evidently would not have been said if he had known that there was in existence a state-paper *already* communicating to this renunciation the force and validity of a law.

* Both these letters were afterwards published, with the Manifest of his Majesty the Emperor Nicholas Pávlovitch, under date December 12th, 1825.

"I have to announce to you that I received "yesterday, at 7 o'clock P.M., from the Chief "of the Staff of his Imperial Majesty, General "Aide-de-Camp Baron Diebitch and General "Aide-de-Camp Prince Volkònsky, intelligence "which has prostrated me with the deepest "grief, of the decease of our adored sovereign "and Emperor Alexander Pávlovitch, together "with the act certifying the same, both which "documents are appended hereto in the original. "I hasten to share with Your Imperial Majesty "the affliction which has fallen upon us, ear- "nestly imploring the Almighty to vouchsafe "in His ineffable mercy to strengthen us to "support the calamity which has so cruelly "overwhelmed us.

"The rank to which I am elevated by the "affliction which has just fallen upon us, renders "it my duty to pour out before Your Imperial "Majesty, in full sincerity, my undisguised sen- "timents upon this important subject.

"It is not unknown to Your Imperial Majesty "that, urged by my own personal motives, I "entreated our late Sovereign of happy memory "the Emperor Alexander Pávlovitch, to permit "me to renounce my right of inheritance to the "Imperial throne; in reply to which petition I "had the honour to receive, under date of Feb-

" ruary 2nd, 1822, an Imperial Rescript, in His
" Majesty's handwriting, a certificated copy of
" which is hereto appended, wherein His Im-
" perial Majesty announced his supreme consent
" and approbation, informing me, at the same
" time, of the consent of Your Imperial Majesty
" also, of which resolution I received personal
" confirmation from Your Majesty's own lips.
" At the same time it was His late Majesty's
" pleasure to order that the above-mentioned
" Rescript should not then be published, but
" be kept in my possession until His Majesty's
" decease.

" Accustomed from childhood to a scrupulous
" fulfilment of the commands not only of my
" late father, but no less of my deceased Sove-
" reign the Emperor, as well as of Your Imperial
" Majesty, I now, without overstepping the
" limits of those commands on the present occa-
" sion, consider it my duty to yield and abandon
" my right to the succession, conformably to a
" legal act of state regulating the hereditary
" transmission of the succession of the Imperial
" family, to His Imperial Highness the Grand
" Duke Nicholas Pávlovitch and to his issue.

" With the same sentiments of sincerity I
" hold it my duty to declare, that I, without
" extending my views and desires to anything

" farther, shall ever esteem myself most fortunate " in being permitted to continue the faithful " service of upwards of thirty years, which I " have already devoted to Their Majesties of " blessed memory my father and brother, hence- " forward to His Imperial Majesty Nicholas " Pávlovitch, with the same profound venera- " tion, lively zeal, and unbounded devotion, as " have on all past occasions animated and will " continue to animate me to the last moment of " my life.

" In thus announcing the sincere and in- " eradicable sentiments of my heart, and throw- " ing myself at the feet of Your Imperial Ma- " jesty, I beg to offer my most humble entreaties " that Your Majesty, in honouring this letter " with your favour and attention, will graciously " please, by communicating it in the proper " quarter, to facilitate its being put into neces- " sary execution; in order that full force and " effect may be thereby given to the consent " accorded by His Imperial Majesty, my late " gracious Sovereign and benefactor, and at the " same time to Your Imperial Majesty's appro- " bation and concurrence.

" With this letter I beg at the same time most " humbly to lay before Your Imperial Majesty a " copy of the letter addressed by me, together

" with the present communication, to His Im-
" perial Majesty the Emperor Nicholas Páv-
" lovitch.

" I am, with the deepest veneration,
" Most Gracious Madam,
" Your Imperial Majesty's
" *Most humble and most dutiful son,*
" THE CESARÈVITCH CONSTANTINE."

" MY BELOVED BROTHER!

" With a heart overwhelmed with grief
" I received yesterday, at 7 o'clock P.M., the
" afflicting intelligence of the decease of my
" adored Sovereign and benefactor, the Emperor
" Alexander Pávlovitch.

" In hastening to communicate to you the
" terrible loss which we have undergone, I con-
" sider it my duty to inform you, that together
" with this letter I have despatched another
" communication to Her Imperial Majesty, our
" beloved and venerated Mother, announcing
" my irrevocable determination to give up in
" your favour my right to the inheritance of the
" Crown of the Empire of All the Russias.
" This renunciation I make in conformity with

" an Imperial Rescript in the handwriting of " His late Majesty, addressed to me under date " of the 2nd February, 1822, in reply to my " letter to His Imperial Majesty, in which I en- " treated to be excluded from my right of suc- " cession to the Imperial throne, and which, " having been laid before our Mother, was " honoured not only with Her Majesty's adher- " ence, but also with her personal approbation " and support; and I have therefore requested " our beloved Mother to communicate the above " documents in the proper quarter, that due " effect may be given to this my unalterable " determination.

" In detailing the above circumstances, I at " the same time regard it as my sacred duty to " offer up my most humble and dutiful petition " that Your Imperial Majesty will be pleased to " receive from me my solemn oath of faithful " obedience and allegiance, and to permit me to " declare that, far from extending my desires " to any new rank, dignity, or title, I wish to " confine myself to that single qualification of " Cesarèvitch, with which I was honoured for " my services by our deceased Father.

" I shall ever regard it as my highest felicity " if Your Imperial Majesty will graciously deign " to accept the assurance of my profoundest

" veneration and most unbounded devotion, in " confirmation of which I offer the pledge of " upwards of thirty years' faithful service and " lively zeal, devoted to Their Majesties of " blessed memory the Emperors my Father and " Brother, and which I shall never cease to " show until the last moment of my existence, by " serving with the same zeal and fidelity Your " Imperial Majesty and Your Imperial Majesty's " posterity in my present functions and quality.

" I am, with the deepest veneration,

" Most Gracious Sovereign!

" Your Imperial Majesty's

" *Most faithful subject,*

" THE CESARÈVITCH CONSTANTINE."

Besides these official communications the Cesarèvitch wrote the following private letter to Nicholas Pávlovitch :—

" By your own feelings, my dear Nicholas, " you may easily appreciate what a cruel blow " is the loss of my benefactor, adored Sovereign " and beloved brother to me in particular, who " have been so tenderly attached to him from " the earliest days of boyhood. You know better

" than any one what a happiness I regarded it
" to serve him and fulfil his commands in every-
" thing important or unimportant. His inten-
" tions and his good pleasure have always been,
" and will ever, though he is now no more,
" continue to be, sacred in my eyes; and I shall
" never cease to obey them to the last moment
" of my existence. But I must come to business
" and announce to you that, in compliance with
" the wishes of our late Emperor, I have sent to
" our Mother a letter containing the expression
" of an irrevocable determination conceived by
" me and previously consecrated not only by
" the approbation of my late Sovereign, but also
" by our Mother. I do not hesitate to believe
" that you, my beloved brother, attached heart
" and soul to him who is no more, will scrupu-
" lously obey his commands, and that what was
" done with his consent and approbation, you
" will, at my request, confirm and bring into
" effect, by taking the necessary steps in con-
" formity with that decision, and by so doing
" honour the memory of a brother who loved
" you tenderly, and to whom our Empire owes
" its glory and present greatness. Continue to
" give me your friendship and your confidence,
" my dear brother, and be assured of my eternal
" fidelity and devotion. My official letter will

" explain the rest. My brother Michael will " carry it you, and will communicate whatever " details you may require. Do not forget me, " my dear fellow, and believe in the devoted " affection of your most faithful brother and " friend."

The answers sent at the same time by the Cesarèvitch to Volkònskii and Diebitch were to a precisely similar effect; but independently of these communications, there was a particular letter to Volkònskii, marked " *private and confi-* " *dential.*" In the former, after giving expression to the feelings of his grief, the Cesarèvitch added, " I lose no time in informing you that I " remain in my present place your comrade " (that is, in the quality of General-Aide-de- " Camp), and therefore I cannot take upon my- " self to make any arrangements; you will receive " your orders on that point from St. Petersburg, " from the proper quarter. . . . Nevertheless, if " you desire to hear my advice as a private " friend, I am of opinion that, in all matters re- " quiring the decision of the Imperial authority, " you must refer yourself to St. Petersburg, " and not send any applications on these points " to me." The *private and confidential* letter to Prince Volkònskii ran as follows:—" For your " own information and that of Baron Ivan

" Ivànovitch (Diebitch) I send you herewith a
" certified copy of a rescript addressed to me,
" in his own hand, by His late Majesty the Em-
" peror Alexander Pàvlovitch, under date 2nd
" February, 1822, which was accompanied by
" an order of His late Majesty, that it should be
" kept by me in secrecy until the decease of His
" Imperial Majesty, and that, in conformity to
" this supreme order, I have requested my be-
" loved and venerated Mother, Her Majesty the
" Empress Mària Féodorovna, to put into execu-
" tion my irrevocable determination contained
" therein. With authority to act upon this
" decision, my brother the Grand Duke Michael
" Pávlovitch leaves this place to-day for St.
" Petersburg. Fully confiding in your own and
" Baron Ivan Ivànovitch's friendly sentiments
" towards me, I remain in complete assurance
" that this rescript will remain buried in the
" profoundest secrecy between you till the mo-
" ment arrives for putting it into the required
" execution."

But what in the mean time was taking place in the capital, from whence the Cesarèvitch had commanded them to wait for orders?

On the 25th of November, in the evening, the Grand Duke Nicholas Pávlovitch was playing at the Anitchkin Palace with his children, who had a little party. Suddenly, at six o'clock a servant announced the arrival of the Military General-Governor of St. Petersburg, Count Miloràdovitch. The Grand Duke went out into the reception-room. Miloràdovitch was walking to and fro with a rapid step, in tears, and with his pocket-handkerchief in his hand. "What "is it, Michael Andrèevitch? What is the "matter?"—"Il y a une horrible nouvelle, "Monseigneur!"—The Grand Duke hurried him into his cabinet, and the old warrior, with a sob, handed him letters from Prince Volkònskii and Baron Diebitch: "l'Empereur "se meurt," added he; "il n'y a plus qu'un "faible espoir!" Nicholas Pàvlovitch could hardly stand. He was obliged to sit down to read the letters. They announced that, though all hope was not yet quite over, the Emperor's condition was very alarming. The first thought of the affectionate son was turned to his mother; but while he was meditating upon the means of communicating to her with the greatest precaution the terrible intelligence, the whole news had already been announced to the Empress by her Confidential Secretary

Villàmoff, to whom also letters had been sent from Taganròg. At the very same moment when the Grand Duke, after relating the intelligence he had just received to the Grand Duchess, was preparing to drive off to his mother, the Empress herself sent a message for him from the Winter Palace. The Grand Duke found his mother, as he had apprehended, in a state of the most dreadful agitation. The condition of the Empress was to that degree pitiable, that this tender son had not the heart to leave her, and remained the whole night in the next room to her bed-chamber, that of the *valets-de-chambre*, with his Aide-de-Camp Vladìmir Fèodorovitch Adlerberg,* the friend and companion of his youth. Their conversation was confined, as was natural, to the intelligence which had just been received from Taganròg, and the Grand Duke, among other things, said, "If it is the will of God to afflict us with "the greatest of calamities, the death of the "Emperor, in that case, the very instant the "news arrives, we must, without losing a "moment, take the oath of allegiance to my "brother Constantine." In the course of the

* Now Count, General Aide-de-Camp, Minister of the Household and Domains, Chancellor of the Russian Orders, and Commandant of the Imperial Head-Quarters.

night the Empress-Mother frequently called her son to her side, to seek from him such consolation as he was able to give. Towards morning, at seven o'clock, a *feld-jäger* arrived with the announcement that there had taken place a change for the better, and bringing a letter from the Empress Elizabeth Alexèevna. "Il y "a un mieux sensible," she wrote, "mais il est "très faible." After morning Mass, and the celebration of a particular service for His Majesty's recovery, the Imperial Family, with the persons immediately attached to it, heard divine service in the great chapel of the palace; the other dignitaries of the state assembled at the Monastery of St. Alexander Névskii. In the Palace, the Empress stood close to the altar, in the sacristy, from which led a glazed door to an ante-chamber. There the Grand Duke also took up his stand, and ordered Grimm, the Empress's old *valet-de-chambre*, in the event of a new *feld-jäger* arriving from Taganròg, to give him a signal by tapping at this door. The Mass was just concluded, and the prayer for the Emperor hardly begun, when the signal was given. The Grand Duke quietly passed out from the sacristy, and in the library of what had formerly been the apartments of the King of Prussia he found Count Miloràdovitch, by

the expression of whose face he instantly guessed the terrible news.* "C'est fini, Monseigneur," said the Count; "courage maintenant, donnez "l'exemple:" and taking him by the arm he began to lead him out of the room. On arriving at the passage which existed behind what was formerly the Hall of the Chevalier-Guards,† the Grand Duke felt himself on the point of fainting: he sank into a chair and sent for Ruhl, body-physician to the Empress, without whose presence he was afraid to communicate the news, dreading the possibility of its causing her a stroke of apoplexy. Ruhl speedily arrived, and then they all three proceeded. The prayers for the recovery of the Emperor were still going on; but the Empress had not failed to perceive the prolonged absence of her son: she was on her knees, in the cruellest agonies of suspense. On entering the sacristy, the Grand Duke, without speaking, prostrated‡ himself on the

* The intelligence, consequently, did not arrive at Petersburg till nearly forty-eight hours after it had reached Warsaw. Baron Diebitch's letter to the Empress was addressed to the Dejournii General Potàpoff, who entrusted it to Miloràdovitch.

† At present the Hall of Alexander: the passage alluded to above no longer exists.

‡ In the Greek Church it is customary, at many parts of the divine service, for the worshipper to kneel down, and then, bending forward, to bow down so as to touch the ground with his forehead.—*Translator.*

ground. From this gesture the heart of the mother guessed the truth, and a terrible stupor seemed to enchain all her faculties: she could find neither words nor tears. The Grand Duke passed through the inclosure of the altar* in order to stop the service, and brought back with him her Confessor Krinìtzkii, holding the crucifix in his hand, and who was in the act of concluding the prayers. It was not till then that the Empress, bowing to the ground before the Crucifix, was able to shed the first tear. "Suddenly," writes an eye-witness of these events,† "when, after the loud chanting of the "choir, the church became suddenly still, and no "sound was heard but the prayer pronounced "in a low voice by the priest, there fell upon "the ear a sort of gentle tap at the door—of "the cause of it I am ignorant: I only remember "that I shuddered when I heard it, and that all "who were in the church directed an agitated "and enquiring look towards the doors: no "one, however, entered through them, and the "circumstance caused no interruption in the

* Through the *ikonastàs*—this has been explained above. It may be mentioned that no woman is, under any pretext, allowed to pass behind this screen in a Greek church.—*Translator.*

† Our excellent poet Jukòvskii, then preceptor to the Grand Duke Alexander Nicholàevitch, now reigning Emperor, whom God long preserve!

" service, which did not however go on many
" minutes. The north doors opened: from the
" altar appeared the Grand Duke, as pale as
" death: he raised his hand to command silence;
" everything was still, and as it were immovable
" with suspense: but in an instant all seemed
" to understand at once that the Emperor was
" no more: the whole congregation uttered a
" kind of inarticulate exclamation. In a moment
" all was agitation, the whole crowd burst into
" one confused chorus of cries and sobs and
" weeping. Little by little the congregation
" dispersed; and I remained alone: in the
" confusion of my thoughts I did not know
" where to go, and at last, as it were mecha-
" nically, instead of leaving the chapel by the
" usual door, I passed through the northern
" entrance to the altar. But what did I see
" there! The door leading to a side room was
" open: there the Empress Mària Féodorovna,
" almost in a state of insensibility, was lying
" in the arms of the Grand Duke: before
" her, on her knees, was the Grand Duchess
" Alexandra Féodorovna, imploring her to
" tranquillise herself: 'Maman, chère maman,
" 'au nom de Dieu, calmez-vous!' At this
" moment the priest takes the cross from the
" altar, and, raising it on high, approaches the

" door; on perceiving the Crucifix, the Empress
" prostrates herself before it to the ground,
" bowing her head to the very floor close to the
" feet of the priest. The unspeakable grandeur of
" this spectacle overpowered me: carried away
" by my feelings, I fell on my knees before the
" sanctity of maternal grief, before the head of
" this princess bowed to the dust under the
" Cross of a suffering Redeemer. The Empress,
" almost insensible, was lifted up, placed in
" an arm-chair, and carried into the interior
" apartments: the doors closed behind her....."

Filial duty was performed. There still remained to be fulfilled another obligation—that of the eldest child of Russia. Leaving the Empress in the arms of his wife, the Grand Duke immediately proceeded to the inner guard of the Palace, which on that day happened to be mounted by a company of the Preobrajènskii Regiment of His Majesty's Life-Guards, under the command of Lieutenant Grawe,* and an-

* Afterwards Aide-de-Camp to H.I.H. the Cesarèvitch Alexander Nicholáevitch, and now retired from the service with the rank of Major-General.

nounced to the soldiers that Russia had just lost her father; that now it was incumbent upon all to take the oath of allegiance to the lawful sovereign Constantine Pávlovitch, and that he, the Grand Duke, was himself about to take that obligation. After repeating the same thing to the two other posts on duty in the interior of the palace, that of the Chevalier-Guards and that of the Horse-Guards, he ordered the Dejournii-General Potàpoff* to receive the oath of allegiance from the main-guard of the Palace, and his Aide-de-camp Adlerberg, from the Corps of Engineers, of which, as we have remarked several pages back, he was Commander-in-Chief. Then the Grand Duke, attended by Count Miloradovitch, and Generals-Aides-de-camp Prince Trubetzkòi, Count Golenìshtcheff Kutùzoff, and other persons who happened to be on the spot, proceeded to the small chapel in the palace; but, on learning that it had not been reconsecrated after various repairs that had been made in it, he returned to the great chapel, which had not yet been quitted by the clergy after the celebration of divine service, and there took the oath of allegiance to the Emperor Con-

* Subsequently in command of a corps, and afterwards Member of the Council of the Empire, and Chef of the Riga Regiment of Dragoons. He died in 1847.

stantine, signing at the same time the printed formula of the oath. His example was followed by all the persons who accompanied him, and by many other officers and civil functionaries who happened to be at the Palace.

From the church the Grand Duke hurried back to the Empress. She was in her own apartments, overwhelmed with sorrow, but filled with Christian resignation to the decrees of Almighty Providence. Nicholas Pávlovitch informed her that he had already fulfilled his first duty to the new Emperor, and that all the posts on guard, as well as Milorádovitch and many others, had taken the oath of allegiance with him. "Nicolas, qu'avez-vous fait!" exclaimed the Empress, with alarm; "ne savez-vous donc "pas qu'il y a un acte qui vous nomme héritier "présomptif?" The Grand Duke now heard of it for the first time. "S'il y en a un," he replied, "il ne m'est pas connu, et personne ne "le sait: mais nous savons tous que notre maître, "notre Souverain légitime après l'Empereur "Alexandre, est mon frère Constantin; nous "avons donc rempli notre devoir: advienne ce "qui pourra!"

While the events which we have just described were taking place in the Palace, the Church of the Monastery of St. Alexander

Nevskii, during the celebration of the Communion-service, was entered by the Chief of the Staff of the Guard General Neidhardt,* who communicated the melancholy news to General Vóinoff, then commanding that corps. In one moment the news had flown through the whole church, where it was responded to with a universal groan of lamentation. Among the persons who happened to be at the Monastery, those who were attached to the court, and among them Prince A. N. Galìtzin, hurried off to the Winter Palace. While in the act of ascending the staircase, Galìtzin was informed that all was over. He instantly ordered himself to be announced to the Grand Duke, and, half frantic with grief at the loss of the beloved Monarch, he made no secret of the despair he felt at what had taken place in the Palace. After confirming the assertions of the Empress, he began to reproach Nicholas Pàvlovitch for having taken the oath of allegiance, and insisted on his obeying the will of the late Emperor. The Grand Duke, on his part, announced to him, that this will had never been proclaimed, and had remained a secret even to himself; and he added,

* Afterwards General-Aide-de-Camp, Commandant of a detached Corps, and Senator; died in 1845, with the rank of Member of the Council of War.

that by taking the oath he had only wished to testify his respect for the primary and fundamental law regulating the unchangeable order of succession, to annihilate every shadow of suspicion as to the purity of his intentions, and to preserve Russia from even a momentary uncertainty as to who was the lawful Sovereign; what was done, he concluded, was irrevocable; but that, even had this not been the case, he would have acted precisely in the same manner: lastly, he in the most decisive terms refused Golitzin's requisition, which, he said, appeared to him to be completely misplaced, and so much the more so as his elder brother, to whom the throne of right belonged, was not upon the spot. Both parties were displeased—the one by obstinate interference, the other by unyielding tenacity. They separated with evident coolness.

From this moment began that majestic episode in our history, nothing similar to which is to be found in the annals of another nation in the world. History, to use the words of a great writer, is nothing else but a chronicle of human ambition. The acquisition of power, whether justly or unjustly, the preservation or extension of that power when once acquired, the recovery of lost influence—such are the ordinary contents

of its pages: it is about these efforts that are concentrated all other historical events. With us, on the contrary, it has departed from its eternal laws, and offers the example of a hitherto unheard-of struggle—a struggle not for the acquisition of power, but for its renunciation!

On the same day, the 27th, at two o'clock in the afternoon, an extraordinary meeting of the Council of the Empire was summoned. The intelligence of the oath of allegiance having been taken was first communicated to it by Prince Galìtzin, in a voice broken by emotion. While the members were assembling, he narrated to those who had arrived his conversation with the Grand Duke, and bitterly deprecated his unnecessary precipitation in taking the oath, there being in the custody of the Council a particular paper having reference to the succession. To these assertions Galìtzin added the other details which we have specified farther back, viz. that the paper in question had been copied by himself; that other copies of it were also to be found in the Synod and in the Senate; and lastly, that the original Act was deposited in

* The Council then held its sittings, as it still does, in the Winter Palace, but in the main building, near the dark corridor, in what is now the hall of the Grand Duke Michael Nicholàevitch, where there stands a large model of a ship.

the sanctuary of the Cathedral of the Assumption in Moscow, with orders that on the decease of the Emperor the packet containing the Act was to be opened by the Military General-Governor and the Archbishop of the Diocese. In spite of all this, the Minister of Justice, Prince Dmìtrii Ivànovitch Lobanoff-Rostòffskii, one of the persons who had already sworn fidelity to the new Emperor, announced his opinion that it was by no means necessary to open these papers, farther stating that he would not do so in the Senate; that the Council was nothing but *the Emperor's Chancery*; and that "les morts n'ont point de volonté." To the same effect spoke also Admiral Alexander Semeònovitch Shishkòff, affirming, with the affected warmth which characterised him, that the Empire could not remain for a single instant without a sovereign, and that it depended upon the will of Constantine Pávlovitch to accept or not to accept the throne; and that it was to him that they ought, by the regular order of succession, to swear allegiance. All the other members, however, were of the opposite opinion, and maintained that it was indispensably necessary first to unseal the packet, and to read the Act which it contained. Then the President of the Council, Prince Lopukhín, sent Acting Secretary of State Olènin to the archives for the

packet, which, after due verification that the seal was untouched and entire, was opened, and the papers which it contained, whose tenour is already known to us, were read out to the Council for the information of all present.

But scarcely—to quote the words of the journal in which were enrégistered the sittings of the Council—" had the assembly listened, with loyal " veneration, with sad and deeply-afflicted hearts, " to the last will and pleasure of His deceased " Majesty of glorious and blessed memory, the " Emperor Alexander Pávlovitch, as expressed " and contained in a copy of an Imperial Mani- " fest, bearing the Sign Manual of His late " Majesty the Emperor," when Count Miloràdovitch, who to the functions of Military General-Governor of St. Petersburg added also those of Member of the Council, announced to the assembly, " that His Imperial Highness the " Grand Duke Nicholas Pávlovitch had so- " lemnly renounced the right conferred upon " him by the said Manifest, and had already set " the example of swearing allegiance to His " Majesty the Emperor Constantiné Pávlovitch."

All the members were in the greatest embarrassment. The Council, which has always been, both before and since that time—as it was justly designated by the Prince Lobànoff—

nothing more than the *Emperor's Chancery*—all of a sudden, in a most solemn and critical moment for the Empire, at the moment when the grave question of the succession was pending, found itself elevated, by the force of circumstances, to the dignity of a great organ of *state authority*.* The announcement that the heir named in the Manifest had declined the crown, communicated as it was to the Council verbally and through the channel of a third person, must have been far from sufficient to put an end to the general indecision.

"The members of the Council of the Empire," continues the protocol of the sitting of that body, "after a short consultation among themselves, addressed an urgent entreaty to Count "Miloràdovitch that he would use his influence "with His Imperial Highness to obtain permission for the Council to present themselves for "a personal audience with His Highness, in

* From the Report of the Criminal Commission, it is known that one of the conspirators, in speaking afterwards of this circumstance, gave the following insolent expression to his treasonable disappointment: "that an opportunity was lost, such as fifty years would not "again offer: if the Council of the Empire," he said, "had possessed a "few in it *with heads*, that now Russia would have sworn allegiance "not only to a new Emperor, but *to new laws*." By the mercy of Almighty God, the Council had among its members true statesmen, who admirably comprehended both their own duty and the welfare of Russia.

" order that they might be honoured with the " satisfaction of hearing from his own lips his " final and irrevocable pleasure on the matter." This request was granted, and the Council was introduced into the apartments formerly occupied by Michael Pávlovitch, where the Grand Duke Nicholas was awaiting their coming. " There," continues the journal, " His Highness " deigned personally to repeat verbally to the " whole Council of the Empire that he would " not listen to any other proposition from them " with the exception only of their readiness to " take the oath of fidelity and allegiance to His " Imperial Majesty the Emperor Constantine " Pávlovitch,—an oath which he had already " taken himself; that the papers which had " just been read to the Council of the Empire " had long been known to His Highness, but " had never been able to shake his determina- " tion, and therefore that every true patriot " would instantly follow his example.* After " this, at the urgent entreaty of the Members " of the Council, His Imperial Highness, after " reading the documents which had been un- " sealed at the sitting of the Council, and which

* Now the private apartments of His Majesty the Emperor Alexander Nicholáevitch, separated only by a corridor from the then Hall of the Council.

" were presented to him by the Acting Secre-
" tary of the Empire, hastened to propose to
" the members that they should immediately
" proceed to the Chapel of the Palace, to take
" the required oath of faithful allegiance to His
" Majesty the Emperor Constantine Pavlovitch.
" In consequence of which the Minister of
" Justice informed His Highness, that, as he
" possessed in the custody of the Supreme
" Directing Senate papers similar to those
" which had been preserved in the Council of
" the Empire, he should not unseal them in the
" Senate."

From the manner in which this journal is drawn up, two conclusions may evidently be deduced: on the one hand, the extreme hurry with which it was composed; after the session, which commenced at two o'clock, it was drawn out, copied, signed by all the members, and the copy sent off to Warsaw *on that very day*; and, on the other hand, that it was first laid before the Grand Duke for examination, who, though his words constituted the fundamental element in this journal, nevertheless took no part in countersigning it, because he was not a member of the Council. It is to these two circumstances that we must attribute the inaccuracy, and even some slight contradiction, that may be found in

its expressions. Having heard from the Empress-Mother, some time before the decease of the Emperor Alexander, that there was in existence a certain act of renunciation on the part of the Cesarèvitch Constantine, the Grand Duke, in his explanation with the Council, referred indubitably to *this* act alone, and not to the others, respecting whose contents—nay, even respecting whose very existence—he had never heard a syllable until after he had taken the oath, and then first from the Empress-Mother, and afterwards from Prince Galìtzin. Had it been otherwise, if he had asserted, as is said in the journal, that the papers read in the Council "*had been long known to him*," there could not have been any conceivable motive for the "earnest entreaty" of the Members that he *would read those papers*. But in the hurry of the moment one thing was confounded with others, and in the drawing-up of the journal the truth of the facts was mutilated. Besides all this, there was not in the journal a single detail which, according to the usual forms, ought, perhaps, to have been inserted in an official act of this nature, but the whole is, notwithstanding, no less curious on this very account, as it completes the picture of the general event. When, after reading all the papers, the Grand Duke

repeated before the Members his refusal of the throne, and again required them to swear allegiance to his brother, the President of the Department of Economy, Count Litta, said to him: "Conforming ourselves to the will of the "late Emperor, we, not having taken the oath "of allegiance to Constantine Pávlovitch, recog- "nise you as our Sovereign; you alone, there- "fore, have the right to give us orders; but, "if your determination is immutable, we must "obey it: conduct us, therefore, yourself to the "oath." The Grand Duke readily consented to this, and all the members followed him to the Palace-Chapel, there took the oath in the presence of the Grand Duke, who afterwards conducted them to the private apartments of the Empress-Mother, where were assembled all the members of the Imperial House who happened to be in Petersburg at the time.

"Her Majesty the Empress," continues the journal, "notwithstanding the severe distress "under which she was suffering, considered it "necessary to announce to the members of the "Council of the Empire, that the papers which "had just been read in that assembly were "known to Her Majesty; that the whole pro- "ceeding had been entered upon with the full "consent, and at the earnest request, of the

" Cesarèvitch himself; but that she, in con-
" formity with every principle of justice, was
" bound to give her adherence to the generous
" sacrifice of His Imperial Highness the Grand
" Duke Nicholas Pávlovitch. In conclusion,
" Her Majesty exhorted the Members of the
" Council to serve the new Sovereign with zeal
" and fidelity."

Thus passed this memorable sitting, which, beginning in the hall of assembly of the Council, continued in the presence of the Grand Duke, thence transferred to the House of God, was at last terminated in the apartments and under the eye of the Empress Mária Féodorovna. " On " returning to the place of assembly of the " Council," concludes the journal, " the Members " engaged in a discussion respecting the various " events which had taken place on that day, " and came to the following decision:—to cause " them to be detailed in the journal, in the " manner set forth above, and to order the " Acting Secretary of the Empire, according to " the regular order established in such cases, to " present an abstract of this journal, together " with a humble and dutiful address in the " name of the President of the Council of the " Empire, for the inspection of His Imperial " Majesty the Emperor Constantine Pàvlovitch.

"But the papers now read in the Council of "the Empire were to be preserved as before, "under lock and key and under the Presi- "dential seal, in the archives of the Chan- "cery of the Empire, until His Majesty should "think fit to signify his pleasure respecting "them." *

From the Empress the Grand Duke once more proceeded to the Palace Chapel, and there, after relating to Seraphim, Metropolitan of St. Petersburg, who had arrived in the interim, all that had taken place in the Council, gave his consent that the packet deposited in the Synod should be left unopened until further orders. He then heard a short service consisting of prayers for health and long life to the Emperor Constantine, and a requiem for the soul of the deceased Emperor Alexander.

In compliance with the measures thus determined on, on the same day, not only the troops but the civil functionaries were admitted to take the oath of allegiance to the new Sovereign, and a special *feld-jäger* was despatched to Warsaw with the copy of the journal of the Council of the Empire, together with reports from Olènin and Prince Lopukhin. Thither, too, were sent,

* This journal was signed by twenty-two Members.

as other special couriers, with reports of the oath of allegiance having been taken—from the Grand Duke, his Aide-de-Camp Lázareff; from the Minister of War (Tatìstcheff), the Aide-de-Camp Sabùroff, who also carried the report of the Minister of Finance; from the Minister of Justice, Acting Premier Procureur in the Senate Nikìtin; &c. &c. Lastly the Grand Duke, in his tender anxiety on his brother's account, gave orders for the instant departure to Warsaw of a person who was honoured with the particular confidence of the Cesarèvitch, who had previously been his Aide-de-Camp, but who had retired from the service and was residing at St. Petersburg—Féodor Petròvitch Opotchìnin. Làzareff was charged with the following autograph letter from Nicholas Pàvlovitch:—

"My dear Constantine!

"I present myself before my Sovereign "with the oath of allegiance, which it is my "duty to offer him, and which I have already "taken, together with all those who are attached "to me, in the church, at the very moment "when we were overwhelmed by the intelli- "gence of the cruellest of all calamities. How "I sympathise with you, and how unhappy we

" all are! For God's sake, do not abandon us,
" do not leave us in our distress!

" Your affectionate Brother,

" Who will live and die your

" faithful subject,

" NICHOLAS."

Nothing now remained but that the oath of allegiance, taken in Petersburg, should be taken throughout the whole empire. This measure, according to the usual form in such cases, belonged to the province of the Senate, which prescribed that this should be done by ukàzes distributed on the same day, the 27th November, throughout all the provinces by special couriers. The preamble of this edict was as follows:—" In " a General Assembly of the St. Petersburg " Departments of the Legislative Senate, His " Excellency the Minister of Justice announced " the afflicting intelligence of the decease of His " Imperial Majesty the Emperor Alexander " Pávlovitch, after a severe illness, at Taganròg, " on the 19th of this current November. The " Legislative Senate, in General Assembly con- " vened, after taking an oath of fidelity and " allegiance to the lawful Heir Apparent, His " Imperial Majesty the Emperor Constantine " Pávlovitch, *does hereby order and edcree:* that

" the same be publicly made known, promul-
" gated, and proclaimed by printed ukàzes."
Then followed the usual clauses respecting the details of the administration of such oaths. In the form of oath appended to the ukazes, notwithstanding the fundamental law of 1797, which regulated the order of succession to the throne, the expression was still retained, which had been included in the form prescribed during the reign of the Emperor Alexander: "and to
" the Heir of the said Throne, *who shall be here-*
" *after appointed.*"

After having thus narrated the course of events at Warsaw and at Petersburg, we will now transport ourselves to Moscow, where the original act of 1823 had been preserved, and where there was not at this moment a single member of the Imperial House.

The news of the dangerous nature of the Emperor Alexander's disease was not long in spreading to the ancient capital. On the 27th of November—the very day when Petersburg was taking the oath of allegiance to the new Sovereign—somewhat encouraging news arrived in Moscow; but it was but the dying flicker of a hope destined to be almost instantly extinguished. On the evening of the 28th the Archbishop Philarèt was visited, at the hour of

vespers, by a person of his acquaintance, who, on the prelate's enquiring why he was so melancholy, replied, "Why, do you not know that "ever since morning there has been a report "that we have lost the Emperor?" When Philaret recovered from the first feeling of terror caused by this news, it seemed to him singular that he had been left so long without intelligence from the Military General-Governor of Moscow, who could not, he thought, but be aware of the gravity of the events which were in preparation. On the morning of the 29th he invited to his house one of the highest dignitaries in Moscow, Prince Sérgii Michaélovitch Galítzin, and with him proceeded to Prince Dmìtrii Vladìmirovitch Galìtzin. The latter had as yet received no official announcement of the Emperor's decease, and the Archbishop communicated to him his opinions respecting the complicated and embarrassing state of affairs as matters then stood. The Cesarèvitch Constantine, he said, had at the beginning of the year 1822 written a letter to the Emperor in which he declared his intention of renouncing his right to the succession; till the middle of 1823 no legislative act had been executed on the subject, and the manifest which had at last been drawn up for the purpose of naming the

second brother Heir to the throne had remained buried in the deepest secresy—a secresy which extended even to the mode and place of the deposit of the manifest. It may consequently happen, argued he, that the Cesarèvitch, ignorant of this circumstance, and supposing that his proposal never received any final confirmation, may determine upon accepting the crown; in that case Moscow may receive from Warsaw a manifest announcing the accession of Constantine Pàvlovitch sooner than from Petersburg the manifest proclaiming that Nicholas has mounted the throne. During the course of this conversation it transpired that the General Governor—as we have already stated—was up to that moment in total ignorance of the existence of the act in the Cathedral of the Assumption. He was about to express a desire to proceed immediately to the Cathedral, for the purpose of ascertaining the facts; but the Archbishop would not consent to this course, representing that by so doing rumours might gain currency whose effects it would be impossible to foresee, and even calumnious reports of something having been *now* clandestinely introduced among the state-papers, or at least that the acts previously deposited had been tampered with. It was ultimately determined that, in the event of

a manifest arriving from Warsaw, it was not to be proclaimed, and that no steps should be taken till such a manifest should be received from Petersburg as would fix upon the true Monarch.

But hardly had precautionary measures been decided on to guard against difficult eventualities, when other embarrassments arose, and still more formidable ones, in a totally different quarter.

On the evening of the same day (the 29th) there arrived in Moscow Manteuffel, aide-de-camp to Count Miloràdovitch, who had been despatched from Petersburg by the Count with a private letter to the Military General-Governor of Moscow. This officer arrived before the distribution of the ukàz of the Senate. Miloràdovitch informed Prince Galìtzin that in Petersburg the oath of allegiance was already taken in favour of the Emperor Constantine, that the example of doing so had been set by Nicholas Pàvlovitch himself, and that the Grand Duke's irrevocable will was that it should be taken also in Moscow, without the packet being opened which had been deposited in 1823 in the Cathedral of the Assumption. On receiving so unexpected an announcement, the General Governor found it indispensable to obtain, first of all, the opinion of the Premier Procureur of the General Assembly of the Moscow Depart-

ments of the Senate, Prince Paul Pàvlovitch Gagàrin,* whose functions were at that time armed with particular powers. "In swearing "allegiance to the late sovereign," answered Gagàrin, "we swore fidelity to the Heir *who* "*should be appointed.* At the present moment "we have no act before us in which the late "Emperor has named his successor; conse- "quently, our plain duty is to refer to the fun- "damental law of 1797, and by that law, in the "event of the Emperor's decease without issue, "the throne passes to the next in age of his "brothers." On these grounds Gagàrin proposed to convoke the Senate on the morning of the following day, to pass, in conformity with the above-mentioned law, a decree ordering the oath of allegiance to be administered in the name of Constantine Pàvlovitch, and to be immediately taken in the Cathedral of the Assumption. The Archbishop Philarèt, to whom the General Governor showed Miloràdovitch's letter, pronounced the opinion that, in his point of view, a mere private communication could not, in an affair of such political importance, be employed as an official document. But the General Governor, on the other hand, found

* Now Member of the Council of the Empire.

that, as the oath had already been administered in Petersburg, the deferring to do so in Moscow would appear disloyal, and might even be not unaccompanied with serious danger to the public tranquillity. Philarèt proceeded to argue that, for the administering of an oath of allegiance in the Cathedral, an act of state was absolutely indispensable, in the absence of which, and without, moreover, an ukàz from the Synod to the ecclesiastical authorities, it would be improper for them to take such a step. The General Governor then related his interview with Gagàrin, and mentioned the proposal made by the latter of convoking the Senators in an extraordinary sitting, adding, at the same time, that, if the Senate did not decide upon taking any steps, he, the General Governor, had the intention of administering the oath, at all events, to the functionaries of the provincial executive. The Archbishop, however, stated that such a proceeding would be not only incompatible with the exact precision requisite in all official acts, but with the rules of propriety, and might even arouse suspicions in the minds of the people, particularly if the oath were not taken at the same time by the Senate also. At last, when the General Governor demanded that the oath should be administered, at least in

the event of the Senate's coming to a decision to that effect, and ordering their decree to be read in the Cathedral of the Assumption, the Archbishop found it no longer possible to refuse his concurrence, or to take upon himself the responsibility of such a refusal: for it is impossible, thought he, that there can be one Emperor at Petersburg and another at Moscow, or to suppose than an act confided to the Council of the Empire, to the Synod, and to the Senate, could have been set aside as inobligatory, but on grounds of the very highest importance, or that the contents of this act, whether we consider the superscription on the envelope, or the circumstance of the continued presence on the spot of a man so long celebrated as a faithful servant of the late Emperor as Prince A. N. Galitzin, could have remained unknown. In consequence of these considerations, Philarèt ceased to offer any further opposition to the taking of the oath at Moscow, as it had already been administered at Petersburg. But as it was impossible to foresee whether the Senate would determine upon making a decree to this effect, he settled that, in order to avoid premature publicity, secret orders should be given to the superior clergy to assemble in the Cathedral of the Assumption for the service generally celebrated on the 30th

November in commemoration of St. Andrew the Apostle. At the same time the General Governor promised to give notice to the Archbishop, at eleven o'clock in the morning, at the Tchùdoff* Monastery, of the decision come to by the Senate.

On the morning of the 30th, at ten o'clock, the Senators assembled on a special summons. No courier had yet arrived from Petersburg with official information. The General Governor personally communicated the contents of Count Miloràdovitch's letter to the meeting, and the Premier Procureur proposed that a decree should be prepared beforehand, commanding the administration of the oath of allegiance to the Emperor Constantine. One of the Senators, Rtìstcheff, was beginning to express some doubts; but Gagàrin cut him short, by remarking that the business before them was not of such a nature that any diversity of opinion could possibly arise. Another, Prince Dolgorùkii, demanded that the original letter from Miloràdovitch should be laid before them; but this request met with obstacles on account of certain confidential details which were contained in the communication. "Is then," enquired Gagàrin,

* In the Kreml of Moscow, close to the Cathedral of the Assumption.—*Translator.*

" the word of the Military General Governor of " Moscow less conclusive in your eyes than a " letter from the Governor of St. Petersburg ?" The Senators signed the decree, and all proceeded in a body to the Cathedral, while the General Governor sent off a messenger to the Tchùdoff Monastery. At that moment the solemn toll of the great bell of the Assumption proclaimed to the capital the tidings of the accession of a new Emperor. The Kreml was filled with a seething crowd of people, among whom had already spread the rumour that some event of unusual importance had taken place, and that on this account there had just been convoked an extraordinary meeting of the Senate. In the Cathedral, Prince Gagàrin read out, for the information of all present, at the open gates of the altar, the decree of the Senate; and the Archbishop Philaret, on whom had fallen the strange destiny of being the keeper of this grave and important secret, administered the oath to all.* Soon after the ceremony arrived at length from Petersburg the long-expected ukàz of the Senate of the 27th November. This ukàz, by

* The original manifest of 1823, with the supplementary documents appended to it, was taken out of the ark and publicly read in the Cathedral of the Assumption; but this was not till the 18th December, before the administration of the oath of allegiance in the name of His Majesty the Emperor Nicholas Pávlovitch.

proving that the measures adopted in one capital were perfectly in accordance with those taken in the other, finally dissipated all doubts which might still have continued to exist.

At St. Petersburg, meanwhile, the state of affairs exhibited difficulties and complications of another kind. No tidings had yet arrived from Warsaw, and after all that had taken place, and had, of course, immediately become matter of general notoriety, the public, nay, even the higher dignitaries of the state, could not but find themselves in a certain degree of embarrassment. The new Emperor was not on the spot, there was no one empowered to act in his name, his wishes and future intentions remained a secret to all, the very place where he was at that moment was unknown, whether he was still at Warsaw, had set off for Taganròg,* or was

* "If the Emperor is with you," wrote Nicholas Pávlovitch, December 2nd, to Prince Volkònskii, who had remained at Taganròg with the Empress Elizabeth Alexèevna, "for God's sake tell him that he ought not to abandon us; that we are his subjects; that we are expecting him with the greatest impatience." To the Cesarèvitch himself Nicholas Pávlovitch, at a still earlier period, had written as follows:—"We are expecting you with the most intense impatience.

on his road to Petersburg—all this uncertainty unavoidably produced something like the confusion of an interregnum. Of the male members of the Imperial House the only one now at Petersburg was Nicholas Pávlovitch, and even he had only the choice of either remaining in complete inactivity, abstaining from everything like the most distant interference in the affairs of the government, which indeed, according to the strict interpretation of the rules of the service, he might, if he pleased, look upon as completely indifferent to him, or, on the other hand, of taking a part in them, and of (at least to a certain degree) directing the proceedings of those persons in whose hands the power of the state was for the time concentrated. In the first of these two cases the forms would be irreproachably preserved; but the Grand Duke considered that by thus throwing off all external responsibility, and by permitting, in the mean while, affairs to take what might be a disadvantageous direction, he would be acting too selfishly and contracting on his soul the danger of a grave sin. In the second case, too, he, as a person who had not

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Our ignorance of what you are doing, and of where you are, is an inexpressible embarrassment to us. Your presence here, were it only on our mother's account, is absolutely necessary."

received the Emperor's authorisation to interfere in the affairs of the government, was devoting himself as a victim, though at least with the conviction of being not useless to the country, and to him to whom he had just given a solemn pledge of zeal and fidelity. Under the influence of these considerations, the Grand Duke could not fail to determine upon the second of these alternatives, to which path he was urged both by the dictates of honour and by the feelings of his heart. "We are impatiently awaiting "intelligence from. His Majesty Constantine "Pávlovitch and the announcement of his "pleasure," he wrote to Prince Volkònskii; "until his arrival, with God's help, we hope to "keep everything in good order." In another letter, dated 3rd December, speaking of the arrangements for transporting to Petersburg the body of the late Emperor, he added, "All "references necessary to be made to the "authorities here, I beg you to make directly "through me." And even here, nevertheless, his position was not without difficulty. The health of the Empress-Mother had fortunately supported the terrible blow she had undergone: while giving to all an example of firmness she even found so much strength both of body and mind as to be enabled, immediately after the

receipt of the fatal intelligence, to fast and take the Holy Sacrament, together with the Grand Duke and his Duchess.* Under all these circumstances caution rendered it necessary to conceal the present course of events from her anxiety, and from the keen curiosity of the persons about the court. But the Grand Duke, reposing a firm confidence on Almighty Providence, determined to act according to its inspirations. All the papers which arrived addressed to the Emperor were brought to him, opened with his own hands, and then, by his orders, disposed of according to the necessity of the case. In the city, however, all was calm and tranquil. Such, at least, were the assurances of Count Miloràdovitch and those few persons whom the Grand Duke allowed to have access to him: for, in this moment of uncertainty and transition he did not consider it proper to show himself in public, and hardly ever quitted the Winter Palace, whither he had transported himself immediately after the arrival of the melancholy intelligence, in order to be near his mother. But behind the veil of external tranquillity there was reigning at this

* The performance of this religious duty was begun by them on the 28th November, and they communicated on the 30th, on the festival of St. Andrew.

very moment a violent agitation among the ill-intentioned in Petersburg; and if the local authorities had not as yet conceived the slightest suspicion of the existence of any particular conspiracy, still it is difficult to understand how they failed to be conducted, if not to the discovery, at least to the suspicion of the existence of a plot, by the frequent and numerously-attended assemblages of the conspirators. Foreign writers affirm that the police had given early information to Miloràdovitch of suspicious meetings of young men; but he, with a burst of laughter at their apprehensions, replied, "It's all stuff; leave these young block-"heads alone to read to each other their trash "of miserable verses." In reality, however, the affair was of a far different nature, and the subject was one of the gravest and most serious kind. In those days it was customary for the officers to assemble, after the parade, in what was called the Horse-Guards' room in the Winter Palace. Hither came every day, by the privilege attached to his rank, one of the most active of the conspirators; and here, amid the noisy concourse of officers of various grades and of a multitude of other persons, who had arrived for the purpose of enquiring after the Empress's health, and in more frequent cases

simply to hear the news, he greedily caught up, and then communicated to his accomplices, everything that in his opinion could serve the success of his criminal enterprise. Another conspirator, Captain Yakubòvitch, of the Nijegorod regiment of Dragoons, had been able, by cunningly affecting the manners of a brave, careless, open-hearted fellow, to acquire the favour of the good-natured and unsuspicious Count Miloràdovitch, and even, by getting admittance into his house, to inspire a certain degree of confidence. In this way the intelligence which the one could not succeed in obtaining at the palace, the other learned from the General Governor, whose character made him easily imposed on by hypocrisy, and was not always cautious in his openness of heart. But the specific projects of the conspirators still remained buried in the profoundest gloom, except to the initiated.

We left the Grand Duke Michael Pávlovitch on the point of setting off from Warsaw after dinner on the 26th of November. The *chaussée* (paved road) of Dünaburg was not yet in exist-

ence: it owes its being, as do almost all the roads of the same kind in Russia, to the reign of the Emperor Nicholas. The route from Kovno to Petersburg lay through Sczawly, Mittau, and Riga. Along the whole line as far as Mittau, nobody had as yet heard of the loss which Russia had experienced. At Mittau itself, the Grand Duke was the first person to communicate the intelligence to the Commandant of the 1st Infantry-Corps Paskèvitch, afterwards so celebrated as Prince of Warsaw. But here Michaël Pávlovitch was in his turn astounded with a completely unexpected piece of intelligence: a traveller who was passing through the town related to his suite that at Petersburg the death of the Emperor Alexander was already known, and that the oath of allegiance had been taken to the Emperor Constantine. "Why, "what will happen if a second oath is taken to "another!" he involuntarily exclaimed, knowing that this danger was inevitable. The Grand Duke arrived in Petersburg early in the morning of the 3rd of December, and, after a short interview with his wife, hastened to the Winter Palace. The report of his arrival was instantly spread over the town, and the first movement of every one who had the means of doing so was to appease the ardour of curiosity by also

rushing to the palace. "Has Michael Pàvlo-
"vitch taken the oath yet?" asked everybody.
"No," replied those who had accompanied him on his journey. The Empress-Mother shut herself up with the just-arrived Grand Duke. His brother, in another room, was anxiously awaiting the news which was to decide his fate. At last the door opened. "Eh bien, Nicolas," said the Empress; "prosternez-vous devant
"votre frère Constantin, car il est respectable et
"sublime dans son inaltérable détermination de
"vous abandonner le trône." These words fell like a thunderbolt on the heart of Nicholas Pàvlovitch. Which of us two, he inwardly asked himself, is making the greater sacrifice? Is it he who, having once determined, from a conviction of his own unfitness, to renounce his paternal inheritance, remains, faithful to his word, in the position which he has himself chosen, and which is in conformity with his taste and his desires, or is it he who, without any means of preparing himself for a dignity from which he was excluded by his very birth, and without ever being made acquainted with a decision involving his whole destiny, now suddenly finds himself obliged, at a most difficult moment, when the future appears anything but smiling, to sacrifice himself and all that he holds

dearest—domestic happiness and tranquillity—to obey the will of another? "Avant que je "me prosterne comme vous le dites, maman," he replied, "veuillez me permettre d'en ap- "prendre la raison, car j'ignore lequel des deux "sacrifices, dans une pareille circonstance, est "le plus grand: de la part de celui qui refuse, "ou bien de celui qui accepte!"

It was, however, even now far from possible to consider the affair as from henceforth definitively settled. The letters from Warsaw had been despatched, under the care of Michael Pàvlovitch, before the intelligence had been received there of the oath having been taken in Petersburg; and this was a piece of tidings that might change everything once more. Besides this, the Cesarèvitch's letters alone, notwithstanding their official character, would be quite insufficient to convince the people that the renunciation of the crown, which had remained, during the life of the Emperor Alexander, a profound secret, should still, particularly after the administration of the oath, be the irrevocable will of the legitimate heir to the throne. In general it may be asserted, that the embarrassment of the position was rather augmented than diminished by the arrival of these letters. Michael Pàvlovitch, in expressing his regret for

what had taken place in Petersburg, did not conceal his apprehensions with respect to a new oath, and spoke of the difficulty of explaining to the public, how it was that the place of the elder brother, to whom they had already sworn fidelity, was to be now occupied by the younger, and how hard it would be to demonstrate to every individual among the populace and in the army the grounds and justice of these—as he styled them—family arrangements. Nicholas Pàvlovitch, in reply to his brother's arguments, repeated what he had previously stated to others: that he could not have acted otherwise in the position in which he had been placed by the secresy which had veiled the acts of the late Emperor and by his own entire ignorance of their existence, and that neither conscience nor reason could inflict the slightest blame on the course he had adopted. "All, however," he added, "might be still arranged, and might "take a favourable turn, if the Cesarèvitch "would himself come to Petersburg; and it is "only his obstinacy in remaining at Warsaw "that can cause calamities, the possibility of "which I do not deny, and of which, in all pro-"bability, I myself shall fall the first victim."

After a prolonged discussion it was determined that a letter should be written to the

Cesarèvitch to the effect that Nicholas Pàvlovitch found himself under the necessity of conforming to his will, provided that that will were again and decisively announced. In consequence of this determination, in a long letter, after imploring a final decision of his fate, and the blessing of his elder brother; promising him, in the spirit of the oath that the writer had taken, the most unbounded obedience and devotedness in whatever he might command; after, lastly, setting forth the source and motives of his conduct in their true and real light, and *laying open his whole soul as if in confession before Almighty God* (these are the words of the original), the Grand Duke once more entreated the Cesarèvitch to come to Petersburg. This request was repeated with great earnestness by the Empress-Mother also. Both letters, written then and there in the hands of their authors, were dispatched to Warsaw by the *feld-jäger* officer Bielobssoff on the same day, the 3rd of December.

The secret conference of the Imperial family, at which all this was determined upon, continued very long, and proportionally aroused the impatience of all those who were in the palace to know in what way it had ended. All rushed to meet Michael Pàvlovitch on his quitting the

Empress's apartments. They knew that he enjoyed the particular affection and confidence of the sovereign to whom Russia had just sworn allegiance; they also knew that he had just arrived from Warsaw, and that consequently he must possess the earliest and most trustworthy information on the whole subject. But why should he continue to maintain such an impenetrable silence? Every one strained his attention in the hope of reading his own destiny and that of Russia in the Grand Duke's countenance, in the expression of his face; trying to seize in that way the key of that enigma whose solution, as all were confident, he had brought with him. The tortures of their agonising curiosity were the more insupportable as no one ventured to give utterance to it by a direct question. "How is "His Majesty the Emperor?" "May we soon "expect His Majesty?" "Where is His Majesty "now?" were the questions showered upon Michael Pàvlovitch on all sides, as he came out of the Empress's apartments; but farther than this no one ventured to go. The Grand Duke, who, in reality, alone knew, but knew without the possibility of announcing it, that the real Monarch of Russia was at that moment *among them*, answered indirectly and by innuendo, "That Constantine Pàvlovitch was well; that he

" had remained at Warsaw; that he (the Grand " Duke) had heard nothing of his coming here," &c. &c. As soon as he could disembarrass himself of these questions, he drove off to his own palace, and there, before doing anything else, he caused service to be celebrated for the repose of the soul of the deceased Emperor. Of course rumours of this too were soon spread through the town. What does all this mean? was the universal enquiry both at court and in the capital: the Grand Duke left Warsaw after the news had arrived there of the death of Alexander Pàvlovitch, he has seen both his brother and his mother here, has celebrated a funeral service for the late Emperor, and yet he has not taken the oath to the new Sovereign. What is the reason that he, and those who came with him, are the only persons excepted from the obligation imposed upon the whole of Russia? And, in truth, all the circumstances of the affair were of such a nature as must have necessarily excited suspicion and given birth to the wildest speculations. The Cesarèvitch's letters had been read only by the Imperial family, which alone was cognisant of their contents, and without them, without this new link in the complicated chain of events, how and in what tendency was it possible to explain the apparent delay

of Michael Pàvlovitch in taking the oath, and the continued silence, not to say inaction, of the Government? The public was quite at a loss how to interpret all this; but its guesses and attempts to divine the mysterious causes which hindered the government from again resuming its regular course of action, combined, perhaps, with the indiscretion of some person or other, at last guided it to the true path. There was spread abroad a rumour, at first obscure and contradictory, but gradually rising higher and higher till it reached the degree of probability, that Constantine Pàvlovitch had renounced the throne. The general opinion began to anticipate that the Imperial dignity would not belong to the person to whom they had already sworn obedience, and the conspirators—of whom we shall presently speak more in detail—instantly came to the conclusion, that the day of the administration of the second oath, which was to replace the first, would be the most excellent and favourable opportunity for putting their projects into execution. In this manner it would seem as if everything was contributing to bring to a head that storm which was to burst upon Russia, but to burst upon her not to her ruin so much as to the detection of all wicked designs and of those who had planned them, to trace out all

the threads in that web of iniquity, and to discover means for the eradication of the evil. Over Russia was watching that same God who, once before, in the days of another interregnum, had elevated to the throne the house of Romanoff, terminated the rebellion of the Streletzes in the glorious autocracy of Peter, and quenched the fires of Moscow in the walls of Paris!

Two days passed. The Emperor's brother and his fellow-travellers had not yet taken the oath. The comments of the town grew still more active, and the disagreeably equivocal position of Michael Pàvlovitch became every hour more oppressive. At his own especial entreaty, it was determined to send him back to Warsaw; ostensibly—to tranquillise Constantine Pávlovitch with respect to his mother's health; in reality—to prevail upon him to come to Petersburg. But in order to avoid the inconvenience of starting while the question of the oath was still unsettled, and in general to escape the danger of crossing on the road any important communications from Warsaw, the Grand Duke was furnished with a paper, bearing the signature of the Empress-Mother, to the following effect:—"The bearer of this open order, His "Imperial Highness the Grand Duke Michael "Pàvlovitch, my beloved son, has hereby full

" power and authority from me to receive in my " name and to break the seals of all letters, " packets, &c., from His Majesty the Emperor " Constantine Pàvlovitch addressed to me." He set off after dinner on the 5th of December. On bidding him farewell, the Empress said to him :—" Quand vous verrez Constantin, dites " et répétez lui bien, que si l'on en a agi ainsi, " c'est parceque autrement le sang aurait coulé." —" Il n'a pas encore coulé, mais il coulera ! " he replied, with a melancholy presentiment.

On the same day, the 5th December, Nicholas Pávlovitch wrote an autograph letter to Prince Volkònskii at Taganròg : " We are expecting " news from His Majesty with the greatest " impatience, for everything depends on him " alone. If we are left here much longer without " orders from him, or in ignorance of his de- " cision whether he *is* or *is not* coming here, we " shall be unable to answer here for the main- " tenance of the present order, quiet, and tran- " quillity, which are, thank God, *complete*, and " striking not only to foreigners, but, I confess, " even to ourselves. Michael Pàvlovitch, who " arrived the day before yesterday with news " from Warsaw that His Majesty has already " been informed of your melancholy intelli- " gence, has brought us nothing decisive, and

" therefore has been dispatched back to Warsaw " this day by my mother, with her most press- " ing entreaty to visit this place, where his pre- " sence is indispensable. My mother's health " is good; the gravity of present circumstances " is advantageous to her by occupying her " attention, and does not permit her to abandon " herself entirely to her grief. God is merciful!"

The Grand Duke Michael Pàvlovitch set out for Warsaw by the same road as he had travelled in his journey from that city; but soon found it necessary to stop. " On arriving at " the post-station of Ranna-Pungern," he wrote from Nennal, on the 8th December, to his brother in Petersburg, " I met a *feld-jäger* from " Warsaw with a letter for Prince Lopukhìn, " and, seeing on the cover 'From His Imperial " 'Highness the Cesarèvitch,' I immediately " guessed what was the state of affairs; at the " same time I learned from the courier that " Làzareff was close behind him, and therefore " I took the *feld-jäger* on with me till we should " meet Làzareff. The contents of the letter to " Prince Lopukhìn I do not know, as I had no " authority to open it. At Nennal I found " Làzareff, who gave me a letter which he had " with him addressed to my mother; from this " letter of Constantine Pàvlovitch you will see

" all his sentiments, which are in exact accord-
" ance with what I told you. At present, not
" knowing what measures will be adopted at
" Petersburg, I think that I should do well to
" remain here and await your orders, for, being
" only 260 versts from Petersburg, if I am
" wanted there I can instantly return; if not, I
" can continue my journey to Warsaw, as if
" nothing had taken place: perhaps it may be
" my mother's pleasure or yours to send some-
" thing fresh to our brother. Be assured I am
" ready to go wherever my mother or you
" please to send me. Two or three days' dif-
" ference in my arrival at Warsaw can do no
" harm, for Opotchinin has already related all
" that has passed. Pray be so good as to let me
" have your orders as soon as possible."

The Cesarèvitch's letter (of the 2nd December) to which Michael Pàvlovitch alludes, was as follows:—

" Your Aide-de-Camp, my dear Nicholas, on
" his arrival here put your letter into my hands.
" I read it with the liveliest grief and sorrow.
" My determination is immovable, and was
" consecrated by the approval of my departed
" benefactor and sovereign. Your proposition
" that I should go to Petersburg as speedily
" as possible I cannot accept, and I warn you

" beforehand that I shall remove into a still
" more distant retirement, if everything is
" not arranged in accordance with our late
" Emperor's wish. Your sincere and faithful
" friend till death,

" CONSTANTINE."

On delivering this letter at his arrival, the 6th December, in Petersburg, Làzareff related that, when he had presented himself, at nine o'clock in the evening of the 2nd, at Warsaw, before Constantine Pàvlovitch, with the words: " I have the happiness of reporting my arrival, " Your Imperial Majesty," he had been dismissed by the Cesarèvitch with an evident change of countenance, after which General Kurùta had enquired of him (Làzareff) of all that had taken place in Petersburg, and had expressed the intention of sending him back again the same evening; but had allowed him, in consideration of his state of health, to rest till morning, placing him in the mean time in the palace itself, with the strictest commands not to stir from thence, and not to speak to any person whatever: that, on being summoned again at ten o'clock the next morning into the presence of Constantine Pàvlovitch, Làzareff had received from him the letter which we have quoted above, with orders to start that instant,

to travel as fast as possible, endeavouring to overtake the *feld-jäger* who was before him (the bearer of the letter to Prince Lopukhìn), and, without alighting anywhere on the road or speaking to any one of the letter with which he was charged, to carry it direct to the Winter Palace.

Michael Pàvlovitch, on his side, as he relates in his letter to his brother, had stopped at the station of Nennal, to await further orders. But from Warsaw to Petersburg there existed at that time another road, through Brescz-Litòwsk, and we shall presently see that this circumstance delayed the return of the Grand Duke at the most critical conjuncture, just as if everything in this affair was destined to be brought about, in defiance of human foresight, by the mysterious paths of Providence.

On the 8th of December, almost immediately after Làzareff, General Aide-de-Camp Toll, Chief of the Staff of the 1st Army, the head-quarters of which were then at Mohilèff on the Dnièpr, arrived in Petersburg.* The Commander-in-Chief Count Sacken had dispatched him to the new Emperor, with a report of the

* General Toll, afterwards raised to the rank of Count, Director in Chief of the Department of Roads and Communications and Public Buildings. He died in 1842.

administration of the oath of allegiance * to the 1st Army, ordering the messenger to make his arrangements in such a manner as to reach Petersburg two days after the Emperor, who, he calculated, had already left Warsaw for the capital. But on the 7th, at the station of Boròvitchi, Toll found a fresh order from Count Sacken: viz. to make all speed to Petersburg, and, if he did not find the Emperor there, to follow him to Warsaw. On learning at Petersburg that the Emperor was not yet arrived there, Toll considered it his duty, before setting off for Warsaw, to present himself for orders to the Empress Mària Féodorovna. He found her, as he had expected, in profound grief; but his report of the command he had received to start in search of the Emperor Constantine, Her Majesty seemed to hear with considerable indifference, and she proposed to him before he started to go to Nicholas Pàvlovitch. The Grand Duke received Toll with the same expression of heartfelt affliction,

* The intelligence of the death of the Emperor Alexander, and of the oath of allegiance taken to Constantine Pàvlovitch, reached Mohilèff in a communication from the Minister of War Sacken on the night of the 30th Nov. to 1st Dec. In consequence the oath was immediately administered there to the officers and men at headquarters, and to the garrison of Mohilèff, and couriers sent on without delay to the Commandants of the different Corps.

conversed with him for some time upon what had taken place, and appeared as if desirous of communicating to him something important, which, however, he refrained from doing. "Each "of us has done his duty, as commanded by his "honour and his oath," said he on taking leave of General Toll, but without giving the least explanation of the meaning of these words; and he seemed to hear, with as little attention as the Empress, the report of Sacken's orders: all that could be deduced, however, from his words, was that the Emperor was not upon the road to Petersburg, and had not yet left Warsaw. Toll left Petersburg, on the evening of the 8th December, by the Riga road. At Nennal he found Michael Pàvlovitch, and there all was explained to him. As soon as he met Toll the Grand Duke put into his hand a packet addressed to him, which had been dispatched from Petersburg immediately after his departure, at 9 P.M. on the same day, the 8th, by a special *feld-jäger* who had passed him on the road, and had orders to wait for him at Nennal. The packet contained the following autograph letter from Nicholas Pàvlovitch: "The circumstances "in which I am placed," he wrote, "did not "permit me to explain to you that your journey "to Warsaw and its object there are *useless*.

" My brother Michael Pàvlovitch will personally
" explain everything to you, and I will only add
" my desire that you will *remain with him until*
" *his return*, under the pretext of awaiting the
" arrival of H. M. the Emperor."

Very slowly wore on the days till the eagerly desired return of Bielòussoff from Warsaw, when suddenly, on Saturday, December the 12th, at 6 o'clock in the morning, the Grand Duke Nicholas Pàvlovitch was roused from sleep with the intelligence that an officer had just arrived and desired to see him instantly. This was Baron Freederickz, Colonel of the Izmàilovskii Regiment of the Life-Guard, who had performed at Taganròg, during the life of the Emperor Alexander, the duty of Commandant.* He brought a packet from Baron Diebitch, superscribed " most urgent," addressed " to His Imperial Majesty, for the Emperor's " own hand." To the enquiry, if he was aware of the contents of the packet, Freederickz replied in the negative, but added that, as they were igno-

* He died in 1849, with the rank of Lieutenant-General, and Commander of the 2nd Grenadier Division.

rant at Taganròg where the Emperor was, similar papers had been dispatched to Warsaw, and that his orders were, in the event of His Majesty not having yet arrived in Petersburg, to deliver the packet, by reason of the extraordinary gravity of the affair, to His Highness.

The Grand Duke was reduced to a most difficult dilemma. To penetrate a secret intended only for the knowledge of the Emperor —for Emperor Constantine Pàvlovitch had not yet ceased to be—seemed to him a step so bold that nothing but the most extreme urgency of the business could warrant him in taking it: while, on the other hand, might it not easily happen that this very urgency had arisen from the circumstance that the papers which had arrived were ordered, in the absence of the Emperor, to be given to him? The duty of a subject, he reflected, is to sacrifice himself, when by so doing he can advance the good of the service, and—he determined on opening the mysterious packet, with full readiness to accept whatever consequences might follow, should his so doing not be approved of by his brother.

At the first rapid glance which he threw upon the papers he had opened, he was overwhelmed with unspeakable horror!

. . . . . .

The latter days of the existence of the Emperor Alexander had been clouded by discoveries which were painful to his heart. So early as 1816, at the return of our troops from their foreign campaign, a number of young men had formed the project of establishing among us something similar to those secret political societies which then existed in Germany. The first association of this kind, originally founded according to the ideas of three individuals, had gradually extended itself, and in February, 1817, had acquired a somewhat regular constitution, under the designation of the *League of Safety*. A handful of hotheaded young men, equally unacquainted with the requirements of the Empire and the spirit and real needs of the people, insolently dreamed of revolutionising the constitution of the state; soon, however, to the idea of revolution was united the impious project of regicide. There are reasons for believing that a part of these projects had become known to Alexander as early as 1818, during his visit to Moscow, at which period those who were about his person observed a sudden change in his spirits and a peculiar gloom which they had never seen before. In the course of time the external symptoms of the sorrow which was weighing upon his mind seemed more or less

perfectly obliterated; but the motives which were the source of that depression, though concealed, had never ceased to exist. By the natural disposition of his character, always more inclined to clemency than to severity, the Emperor looked upon this destructive element with the eyes of magnanimity, in the hope, probably, that the mere lapse of time would bring back to the path of duty those who had wandered from it, among the whole number of whom there was not one from whose capacities and education it would have been possible, even had they been otherwise directed, for the Empire to expect any advantage. The facts known only to himself and to a very small number of confidential persons he buried in the profoundest secresy, contenting himself in the mean time with an attitude of watchful vigilance. But the revelation voluntarily made by a civil functionary before the Commandant of the Corps of the Guard, General Aide-de-Camp Vassiltchikoff, threw upon what had at first appeared insignificant, a clearer and at the same time more alarming light; and still later and in an unexpected manner: through Cadet Sherwood of the 3rd Uhlan Regiment of the Bug in the Military Colony of the Ukraine, and Captain Malboroda of the Viatka Regiment of Infantry, was dis-

closed the existence of a conspiracy, covering, with a network of ramifications, almost the whole surface of the Empire. The measure of Alexander's long-suffering was now exhausted. Even so early as his visit to Taganròg he had ordered the arrest of those among the chief conspirators respecting whom he had information. It is to this order—his last administrative act—that Russia is indebted for the prevention of machinations infinitely more extensive, the mere partial and scattered tentatives at which so tragically distinguished the close of the year 1825. After the decease of Alexander the persons who happened to be with him, and who had been initiated into this important secret, considered themselves bound to communicate it to the new Emperor, and in consequence of their ignorance of the place where he was to be found, Baron Diebitch had sent these two packets, one of which was brought to Petersburg by Freedericksz.

The communication opened by the Grand Duke, after narrating the previous course of events, also described the actual state of affairs. Diebitch wrote that a great number of accomplices were implicated in the conspiracy; that

* In order to obviate the possibility of indiscretion, the whole paper was copied out by General Aide-de-Camp Czernichèff.

the largest knot of malcontents were at the head-quarters of the 2nd Army and forming part of the troops of which it was composed, but that some were in Petersburg itself, among the officers of the regiment of Chevalier-Guards, and also in Moscow, in the 3rd Corps of Foot; lastly, that, a few days before the decease of the Emperor Alexander, and by his order, Colonel Nikolàieff of the Kazàk Regiment of Life-Guards had been sent off to arrest Vàdkovskii, a retired officer of the Chevalier Guard, but that in the present circumstances the writer (Diebitch), in consequence of grave suspicions affecting the head-quarters of the 2nd Army, had decided upon sending General Aide-de-Camp Czernichèff to Tultchin, to put the Commander-in-Chief Wittgenstein upon his guard at all events, and to place under arrest one of the Commanders of Brigade and Commandant of the Viatka Infantry Regiment, Colonel Pestel. In general, notwithstanding the vagueness and inexactness of the information that had hitherto been received, the affair, if it could be judged even by its first features, exhibited itself in very gloomy colours, and urgently demanded, not only the whole attention but active measures on the part of the government.

On the perusal of these papers, the Grand

Duke more than ever felt the cruel embarrassment of his present position. In order to save the Empire from the agitation which menaced it —nay, perhaps, from civil war—it was absolutely necessary to act, without an instant's delay, with decision, with full power, and with supreme and irresponsible authority; and he, without power, without the right of taking a single step of his own authority, could only make his dispositions through the channel of others, and that not in the quality of their chief, but only according to the degree of their personal confidence in himself. Besides all this, it was absolutely necessary to conceal the whole affair in the closest secresy, on the one side from the Empress-Mother, in order not still further to aggravate the agitation of her mind, and, on the other, from all indifferent persons, lest the individuals implicated in the plot might learn that their projects had been denounced. Alone, completely alone, as he was, to whom was the Grand Duke to turn for advice? to whom was he to confide the terrible revelation? After prolonged meditation, his choice fell, at last, upon two persons—Count Miloràdovitch, as the chief authority in the capital, and Prince A. N. Golìtzin, as a man who had enjoyed the full confidence of the late Emperor, and as being,

moreover, at the head of the Post-Office department. They were both immediately summoned. The Grand Duke read to them Diebitch's denunciation, and they determined, by mutual agreement, to arrest those among the conspirators enumerated in the paper, who, by the exigencies of the service, must be at that moment at Petersburg. But the investigation which was immediately set on foot discovered that not one of these persons was then in the capital, and that they were all absent on furlough. This circumstance brought still further confirmation of the correctness of the intelligence which had been obtained from Taganròg, in which the persons enumerated were stated to have quitted Petersburg in order to be present at an assembly of their fellow-partisans. Such conclusive evidence of the real existence of a secret association at last shook even the tranquil confidence of Count Milorà-dovitch, and, at the same time, suggested the highest probability of there being in Petersburg still other sharers in the project whose names were not indicated in the denunciation. The Military General Governor promised to employ the most energetic police measures for the purpose of discovering these, and, besides this, agreed to dispatch to Roth, the Commandant of

a Corps, his aide-de-camp Manteuffel, who had just returned from Moscow, to bring back Captain Maiboroda, from whom, as he was specially and frequently mentioned in Diebitch's report, they hoped to receive still more valuable information. After these, so to speak, preparatory measures, nothing remained but to await the ulterior course of events. But this day, Saturday the 12th of December, which had begun with a discovery so important for the destinies of Russia, was fated to be still farther made memorable by a catastrophe which influenced all her future existence.

The Grand Duke dined *en tête-à-tête* with his wife. Suddenly arrived Bielobssoff. On opening the despatches which he had brought, the Grand Duke saw from the first line that his fate was sealed. The Cesarèvitch, in a private letter to him of the 8th of December, wrote,—"Yesterday evening at 9 o'clock I received your "letter of the $\frac{3rd.}{15th}$, my dear Nicholas; and I "hasten to offer you for it my most heartfelt "gratitude, as well as for the sentiments of con- "fidence and friendship which you express in it "for myself. Be assured, my dear fellow, that "I know how to understand and appreciate "them, and I will prove to you to the last "moment of my life that I am not undeserving

" of them. The confidence—I may say the " unbounded confidence — with which I was " honoured by our departed benefactor, will " serve you as a pledge of the sincerity and " purity of my feelings." (Here followed some passages containing advice and instructions as to the best manner of inaugurating the new reign, and the principles by which it was to be guided.) " I send you the blessing of an elder " brother who belongs to you, from the very " bottom of his heart, and with every sensation " of his mind; and I solemnly assure you, as a " subject, of the devotion and unbounded attach- " ment with which I shall ever remain your " most faithful friend and brother."

In another letter, to the Empress-Mother, the Cesarèvitch anew resisted all hers and his brother's entreaties for his personal presence at St. Petersburg, adding that, as he was not Emperor and could not accept an irregular oath of allegiance, his irrevocable and unchangeable renunciation neither could nor ought to be made in any other form than by the promulgation of the will of the late Emperor and the acts which were appended to it.

With these letters abruptly terminated all indecision. From that instant, and particularly after the news of the morning, on Nicholas

Pàvlovitch lay, for the welfare and tranquillity of Russia, the sacred and no longer to be escaped obligation of calling forth the living power of the throne. He did not disguise from himself, and now even less than before, that his obedience to the wishes of his brother might be the means of leading him to destruction; but a consciousness of duty overmastered all other feelings. In inscribing on the pages of our history one of the noblest and sublimest of its events, Nicholas Pàvlovitch silenced in his heart, before his sacred debt to his country, the voice of self-preservation and self-interest: with a soul overflowing with the most pious confidence in Almighty Wisdom he yielded to its decree.

Nicholas Pàvlovitch was Emperor. . . . . .

But in approaching the mighty change brought about by the irresistible force of circumstances, it was necessary to put it into execution in such a manner as to give as little grounds as possible to absurd and mischievous commentaries, and also to avoid as far as practicable any shock to public tranquillity. The complication of all the preceding events rendered this a very difficult task. At all events it was first necessary to take various preparatory measures.

Before taking any other step the new Emperor had an interview with his mother. Rejoiced at

the termination of a state of indecision, the Empress gave him her blessing on undertaking his mighty task. He then dictated to his Aide-de-Camp Adlerberg the principal clauses of a manifest and its historical portion, narrating in detail the course of events, and referring to the original acts which had any bearing on the subject. It still remained to give to the whole its definitive form, and to compose the preamble and the conclusion of the manifest. With respect to the latter point, and particularly with regard to the wording of the document, the Emperor maintained a long discussion, and in very animated dialogue, with our celebrated historiographer Karamzìn, whom he had honoured, while still Grand Duke, with a remarkably gracious degree of attention, and with whom he had had frequent interviews during the first days which followed the intelligence of the Emperor Alexander's demise. On returning to his own residence, Karamzìn threw upon paper the ideas which in his opinion might constitute the beginning and the end of the manifest. But when he again presented himself at the palace he found with the Emperor Prince A. N. Galìtzin and Count Miloràdovitch, who had just been proposing to confide the drawing up of the rough copy to Speràn skii, Member of the Council of

the Empire. The Emperor asked Karamzìn whether he would write à project of his own? Karamzìn declined to enter into any such rivalry, deeming that an affair of this nature ought to be entrusted to a single person. The result was that Speràńskii was called in to undertake the composition of the manifest. In this act Nicholas Pàvlovitch proposed to announce his accession in a solemn session of the Council of the Empire in the presence of the Grand Duke Michael Pàvlovitch, as the personal witness and messenger of the will of the Cesarèvitch. But the answer from Warsaw had been brought by Bieloùssoff, not through Riga, but by the route of Brescz-Litòwsk; and for this reason Michael Pàvlovitch, still ignorant of what had taken place, was at Nénnal. A special courier was instantly despatched after him. "At last all is "settled," wrote his brother, "and I am obliged "to undertake the weighty task of being Em- "peror. Our brother Constantine Pàvlovitch "has written me a most friendly letter. "Make haste and arrive here with General "Toll. All is quiet and tranquil." Messages were also sent to summon and to inform of the approaching change the Metropolitan of St. Petersburg, Seraphìm; the President of the Council of the Empire, Prince Lopukhìn; and

General Volnoff, who was at that time in command, as we have already stated, of the Corps of the Guard. On the first of these dignitaries was imposed the duty of making the necessary dispositions in the ecclesiastical department; Lopukhin received orders to convoke the Council on the following day (the 13th) at 8 o'clock in the evening, about which time the arrival of Michael Pavlovitch might be calculated on; lastly, Volnoff was commanded to assemble at the Winter Palace, on the morning of the 14th of December, all the superior officers of the Guard regiments.* Nicholas Pavlovitch was anxious to announce and explain to them personally the whole course of affairs, that they might afterwards remove every tendency to disorder, by announcing in their turn and describing it to their subordinates. The general promulgation of the manifest and the administration of the oath of allegiance were likewise fixed for the 14th of December. All this was done in the greatest secresy. The change which was in preparation and the day appointed for the oath did not however remain concealed from the conspirators. No one knew them, but they knew everything.

* In the circular sent round on this occasion by the Chief of the Staff of the Corps of Guards, Nicholas Pavlovitch was still designated as His Imperial Highness the Grand Duke.

A blessing on the approaching event was implored from the powers of another world. After dinner, the new Imperial pair found a few moments of leisure, which allowed them to drive off to the Anìtchkin palace, and there, in the little cabinet of her who *had been* the Grand Duchess Alexandra Feòdorovna, they prostrated themselves in fervent prayer before the bust of her departed mother. . . . .

But the memorable day of the 12th December was not yet over. In the midst of the above-described arrangements, and at about nine o'clock in the evening, it was suddenly announced to Nicholas Pàvlovitch that a person was in the ante-chamber waiting to see him. This was the Aide-de-Camp of General Böstrom, Commandant of the Infantry of the Guard, and he was charged with a packet to be delivered into His Highness's own hand. The Emperor —still Grand Duke for all, excepting the few persons specified a few lines back—immediately came out into the ante-room, received the packet, and re-entered his cabinet,* ordering the Aide-de-Camp to wait. The packet was from a noble young man of twenty, burning with love for his country, and devotedly attached to the

* At present the cabinet of His Imperial Majesty the Emperor Alexander Nicholàevitch.

Grand Duke, the comrade, but in a subaltern rank of the service of the Staff, of one of the conspirators, whom he loved for his good qualities, both of head and heart, with all the enthusiasm of youth. Soon after the administration of the oath of allegiance to Constantine Pàvlovitch, the elder of the two comrades had, on several occasions, begun to repeat to the inferior, sometimes when they were alone, sometimes in the presence of others, that every expedient must be employed to prevent Nicholas Pàvlovitch from reigning, and to oppose any attempt to administer the oath of allegiance in his favour. Our young man, who had been habituated, during the eight months' service which he had performed in the Staff, to the violent attacks of this officer upon Nicholas Pàvlovitch, towards whom he cherished an intense feeling of enmity, at first regarded all this as a mere customary outbreak of ill-will, and attributed to the words no particular significance. But on the 12th of December, on paying a visit to his friend at dinner-time, he found with him some twenty officers of various regiments. They were all conversing in whispers, and on the entry of a stranger they instantly became silent. The youth immediately retired, but in a dreadfully agitated and embarrassed

state of mind, for he then for the first time comprehended that the words of his favourite comrade might possibly be put into execution. Possessing no accurate and convincing evidence of the existence of a conspiracy; in complete ignorance whether it extended over the whole Empire, or whether it was confined to the young men whom he had just seen; and yet at the same time understanding its peril for the common welfare of the country even under the latter supposition alone; observing, lastly, the universal agitation of people's minds throughout the city, arising from a prolonged state of uncertainty, he figured to himself all the calamities which were then, perhaps, menacing Russia, and, in a burst of youthful inexperienced enthusiasm, proposed to himself the solution of a most difficult problem—that of saving at the same time, though at the risk of his own life, his country, and his sovereign, and those very persons upon whom his own unsupported suspicions had fallen. This Aide-de-Camp of the Staff of the Infantry of the Guard was Second Lieutenant of the Life-Guard Regiment of Chasseurs Yàkov Rostòvtsoff.* In the packet which he had put into the Grand Duke's hand there

* Now General Aide-de-Camp and Chief of the Staff of the Military Establishments for Education.

was a letter written by himself to Nicholas Pàvlovitch.

"During the course of four years," he wrote, "having remarked with the most heartfelt "satisfaction on several occasions Your High- "ness's kind disposition in my favour; and "thinking that the persons by whom you are "surrounded may not, at a critical moment, "possess courage enough to be perfectly frank "with you; burning too with ardour to be, in "the measure of my capacity, useful in the "support of the glory and tranquillity of Russia; "lastly, in full confidence that in a man who "has renounced a crown I may amply confide "as in a man truly generous, I have determined "upon taking the present bold step. Do not "regard me as a base and selfish informer; do "not imagine that I am the instrument of the "motives of others, or that I have acted out "of mean views of personal interest. No; it "is with a pure and unstained conscience that "I come to address you in the words of truth.

"By a generous and unselfish proceeding "which has no parallel in the annals of history, "you have made yourself the object of venera- "tion, and Posterity, even though you may "have never reigned, will place you far above "many famous and ambitious princes; but you

" have as yet but begun this glorious action; to
" be truly great, you must complete it.

" Among the people and the army reports
" have been disseminated, that Constantine
" Pàvlovitch has the intention of renouncing
" the throne. In yielding to the natural and
" rare benevolence of your heart, and too blindly
" trusting to your flatterers and confidants, you
" have seriously irritated a great number against
" you. In the name of your own glory I entreat
" you do not hasten to reign.

" A concealed revolt must inevitably be fer-
" menting against you: it will burst out at the
" moment of the new oath of allegiance, and its
" explosion may perhaps illumine the ultimate
" ruin of Russia.

" Profiting by the confusion of civil war,
" Georgia, Bessarabia, Finland, Poland, perhaps
" even Lithuania also, will separate themselves
" from us; Europe will efface from the list of her
" powers Russia thus torn to pieces by her own
" internal dissensions, and will make her an
" Asiatic power, and unmerited curses, instead
" of the blessings you have deserved, will be
" your lot.

" Your Imperial Highness! My anticipations
" are perhaps erroneous, perhaps I have allowed
" myself to be carried away by my attachment

" to you and by my ardent desire for the tran-
" quillity of Russia; but I venture to conjure
" you in the name of our country's glory, in the
" name of your own, prevail upon Constantine
" Pavlovitch to accept the crown! Do not go
" on interchanging couriers with him; this
" only prolongs an interregnum which must be
" ruinous to yourself, during which may make
" his appearance some audacious rebel who will
" profit by the agitation of the public mind and
" the universal uncertainty. No, set off your-
" self for Warsaw, or let him come to Peters-
" burg; pour out before him, as before a
" brother, your thoughts and feelings; if he
" consents to be Emperor, then, God be praised,
" for all is well! If not, let him publicly, in
" the sight of the whole nation, proclaim you
" his Sovereign!

" Most gracious Prince! If you find the step
" I have taken insolent, punish me with death.
" I shall be happy to perish for Russia, and I
" shall die blessing the Almighty's name. But
" if you find that what I have done is deserving
" of praise, I implore you not to reward me in
" any way whatsoever: allow me to remain dis-
" interested and honourable in your eyes and
" in my own! One favour only do I venture to
" entreat from you—order me to be arrested.

"If your accession—which may God grant!—
"is peaceful and happy, punish me with death,
"as a man worthy of disgrace, and one who
"desired, from views of personal interest, to
"disturb your tranquillity; but if, for the mis-
"fortune of Russia, my terrible presentiments
"be realised, then reward me with your con-
"fidence, by permitting me to die in your
"defence."

In ten minutes Nicholas Pàvlovitch sent for Rostòvtsoff into his cabinet, and, after carefully closing after him both doors of the apartment, embraced him and kissed him repeatedly, with the words, "That is what you deserve: such "truth I have never heard!" "Your High-"ness," said Rostòvtsoff, "do not look upon "me as an informer, and do not think that I "came hither to ingratiate myself!" "Such an "idea," replied the Emperor, "is unworthy of "myself and of you. I know how to appreciate "you." He then enquired whether there was not a plot against him. Rostòvtsoff answered, that he could name no one; that many cherished a strong feeling of hostility against him, but that all reasonable men would see in his peaceable accession only the happiness of Russia: lastly, that, although during those fifteen days while the throne was filled only by a coffin,

the public tranquillity had not experienced the slightest interruption, yet that this very tranquillity might conceal under its surface rebellion. After a pause of a few moments the Emperor continued: "Perhaps you are ac- "quainted with several malcontents, and do not "wish to name them, thinking that by so doing "you will be acting against the laws of honour: "in that case, *do not name them!* My dear "friend, I will pay you confidence for confi- "dence! Neither my own entreaties nor the "prayers of my mother have been able to pre- "vail upon my brother to accept the crown: he "absolutely refuses, in a private letter blames "me for having proclaimed him Emperor, and "has sent me, by Michael Pàvlovitch, a formal "act of renunciation. I think that this will be "enough." Rostòvtsoff insisted on the indispensable necessity of the Cesarèvitch's himself appearing at Petersburg, and publicly, before the eyes of all men, in the open square, proclaiming his brother his Sovereign. "What "am I to do?" cried the Emperor; "he abso- "lutely refuses to do this, and he is my elder "brother! However, be easy; we shall take "all the necessary measures. But if human "reason is weak, if the will of the Almighty "has decreed otherwise, and it is necessary that

"I should perish, I have a sword; that is the "ensign of a man of honour. I will die with "it in my hand, confident in the justice and "sanctity of my cause, and present myself "before the judgement-seat of God with a clear "conscience." "Your Highness," said Rostòvtsoff, "all these are personal considerations. "You are thinking of your own glory and for-"getting Russia: what will become of her?" —"And can you doubt that I love Russia better "than myself? But the throne is vacant; my "brother refuses; I am the only lawful heir. "Russia cannot remain, cannot exist, without a "Tsar. Then what does Russia command me "to do? No, my friend, if die we must, we "will die together!" He then embraced Rostòvtsoff, and both burst into tears. "This "moment," continued the Grand Duke, "I "never shall forget. Does Karl Ivànovitch "(Böstrom) know of your coming to me?" —"He is too much attached to you for me to "wish to give him pain by telling him about "it; my first idea was, that it was only by pre-"senting myself as a private individual that I "could be frank with Your Highness." "Very "well; do not say anything to him till the "proper moment arrives. I myself will thank "him for having been able, as an honourable

" man himself, to choose in you an honourable " man." " Your Highness! anything like a " reward would humiliate me in my own eyes." " Your reward is my friendship! Farewell!" He again embraced Rostòvtsoff and retired. The whole morning of the following day, the 13th of December, Rostòvtsoff devoted to the duties of the service; he then drew up a copy of his letter and of the conversation he had had with the Emperor, and after dinner gave these papers, in the presence of Ruilèoff, to his comrade, who was the object of all his apprehensions.*

Rostòvtsoff's information was of very considerable importance. While giving fresh confirmation to the notion which had already arisen, that in the capital itself, independently of the conspirators indicated in Baron Diebitch's communications, and at that moment absent on furlough, there were other parties engaged in the plot, it also furnished evidence of the fact that the pretext for the execution of their de-

* Both these documents were afterwards found among their papers. On the 18th of December, 1825, the Emperor repeatedly expressed his wish that Rostòvtsoff should transfer his residence to the Palace; the latter, however, ventured to return a positive refusal in the presence of several witnesses, desiring to remain in the same position as he then occupied; and in the fulfilment of this desire he was cordially assisted by Flügel-Adjutant V. A. Peròvskii. In 1828 he was appointed Aide-de-Camp to the Grand Duke Michael Pàvlovitch.

signs was to be found in the transfer of the oath of allegiance to a new sovereign. The future appeared every moment gloomier and gloomier! On the same day, the 12th of December, perhaps subsequent to the discovery of this fresh evidence, the Emperor wrote as follows to Prince Volkònskii :—"The will of Heaven "and the sentence of my brother are about to "be fulfilled in me. On the 14th I shall be "either Emperor or *dead!* What I feel cannot "be described; you will probably pity me: yes, "we are all unhappy, but there is no one more "unhappy than myself. But the will of God "be done!" Then on enquiring after the health of the Empress-Mother, he added: "I "am still, thank God! on my legs; but if "I can judge by the few last days, I really "do not know what will be the end of it, for "I am already beginning to grow *transparent.* "Well, God will not abandon me, either bodily "or mentally!"

Rostòvtsoff, however, had neither pointed out nor indicated by name a single individual; and in the mean time the investigations carried on by Count Miloràdovitch had remained completely fruitless. His researches had not discovered one person on whom suspicion could reasonably fall. It was not till the very day of the treason-

able outbreak that its authors and accomplices were divulged.

The project or rough copy of the manifest had been prepared by Speràns kii for the evening of the 12th of December. The Emperor, after suggesting a few corrections, expressed his approval of the document, and continued to keep the whole affair in secresy till the expected arrival of the Grand Duke Michael Pàvlovitch, and in the mean time confided the transcription of the manifest to the personal care of Prince A. N. Golìtsin. Three copies * were made of the paper, during the night of the 12th-13th, by Gavrìlo Popòff, † a confidential clerk in the Prince's department, in the private cabinet of the latter, and under the strictest commands to avoid every possibility of a betrayal of the secret. The Emperor, on affixing his signature to the manifest on the morning of the 13th of December, antedated it, however, the 12th, as being the day on which the whole affair had been definitively decided by the refusal of the Cesarèvitch. On the same morning—that of the 13th of December—they announced the accession of the new Emperor, though accompany-

* One copy for the Empire, one for the Kingdom of Poland, and one for the Grand Duchy of Finland.

† Now acting as Secretary of State in the Council of the Empire.

ing the information with orders not to communicate it to any one else, to his heir apparent, the Grand Duke Alexander Nicholàevitch, then a child of séven years of age. The boy * cried a great deal when he heard it. Then Nicholas Pàvlovitch with the Grand Duchess dined once more for the last time in the Anìtchkin Palace, which had hitherto been their residence, as if to bid an eternal farewell to the past. . . . .

The manifest ran as follows:—

" To all Our faithful subjects, greeting.

" With a heart overwhelmed with grief, yet " bowing with resignation before the unsearch- " able decrees of the Almighty, amid the uni- " versal affliction which has fallen upon Us, our " Imperial House, and Our beloved country, it " is in God alone that we seek for firmness and " for consolation. In the decease of His Majesty " of blessed memory, the late Emperor Alex- " ander Pàvlovitch, our dear and well-beloved " brother, We have lost a father and a sovereign " who during twenty-five years was the constant " benefactor of Russia and of Ourselves.

" When the intelligence of this afflicting " calamity reached us, on the 27th day of No-

* " Le petit Sacha," as he was then called in the Imperial Family.

" vember, We, though in the first hour of our
" mourning and our sorrow, yet, summoning up
" all the energies of our mind for the perform-
" ance of a sacred duty and following therein
" the movements of our heart, took the oath of
" fidelity to our eldest brother, the Cesarèvitch
" and Grand Duke Constantine Pàvlovitch, as
" the lawful heir, in order of primogeniture, to
" the Throne of All the Russias.

" After the due accomplishment of the above-
" mentioned sacred duty, We were informed by
" the Council of the Empire, that, on the 15th
" day of October, 1823, there had been deposited
" at the Council, under the seal of His Majesty
" the late Emperor, a packet bearing the fol-
" lowing superscription, in the handwriting of
" His said Majesty, to wit: '*To be kept in the*
" *Council of the Empire, till demanded back by me,*
" *and in case of my decease to be opened before any*
" *other steps are taken in an extraordinary meeting*
" *specially thereunto convoked;*' that this supreme
" order was obeyed by the Council of the Em-
" pire, and that in the said packet were found—
" 1.) A letter from the Cesarèvitch and Grand
" Duke Constantine Pàvlovitch to His Majesty
" the late Emperor, under date the 14th of
" January, 1822, in which His Highness re-
" nounces his right to the succession of the

"throne, as belonging to him by the law of "primogeniture. 2.) A Manifest, dated the "16th day of August, 1823, bearing the sign-"manual of His Imperial Majesty, in which the "Emperor, after giving his consent and approval "of the renunciation of the Cesarèvitch and "Grand Duke Constantine Pàvlovitch, appoints "as his successor and heir apparent Us, as "being the next in order of birth and the "nearest in succession according to the principles "laid down in the fundamental law regulating "this matter. At the same time information "was conveyed to Us, that acts of the same "tenour and bearing a similar superscription "had been deposited in the Governing Senate, "in the Most Holy Synod, and in the Cathedral "of the Assumption at Moscow.

"This intelligence, however, could not change "the determinations to which we had come. "In these acts we saw a renunciation on the "part of His Highness, made during the life-"time of His Majesty the Emperor, and con-"firmed by the consent and approval of the "latter; but we neither desired nor possessed "the right to consider as binding and irrevocable "a renunciation not yet publicly promulgated, "and not yet invested with the force of law. "And herein we were minded to testify our

" respect to the first fundamental national law
" establishing a firm and unchangeable order
" in the succession to the Throne. And in con-
" sequence hereof, remaining faithful to the
" oath which we had taken, We used all our
" efforts and strongly insisted that the whole
" Empire should follow our example; and this
" We did, not out of any desire to deny the
" reality of the decision announced by His
" Highness, and still less out of disobedience to
" the commands—by Us ever held most sacred
" —of His Majesty the late Emperor, our com-
" mon father and benefactor, but out of a wish
" to preserve from every peril the fundamental
" law regulating the succession of the Throne,
" to guard against the faintest shadow of sus-
" picion as to the purity of Our intentions, and
" to save Our beloved Country from the slightest
" and most momentary uncertainty with respect
" to its lawful Sovereign. This determination
" embraced by Us in purity of conscience, be-
" fore the God who seeth the secrets of all
" hearts, was still further confirmed by the ap-
" proval and the blessing of Her Majesty the
" Empress Maria Feòdorovna, Our most beloved
" Mother.

" In the mean time the melancholy news of
" the decease of His Majesty the Emperor had

" reached Warsaw, direct from Taganròg, on
" the 25th of November, two days earlier than
" it had taken to arrive here. Remaining im-
" moveable in his determination, His Highness
" the Cesarèvitch and Grand Duke Constantine
" Pàvlovitch, on the day after he had received
" the intelligence, viz. the 26th November,
" thought fit to confirm it anew by two acts,
" confided by him to our beloved brother the
" Grand Duke Michael Pàvlovitch to be con-
" veyed hither. These acts are the following:
" 1.) A letter to Her Majesty the Empress,
" Our beloved Mother, in which His Highness,
" after repeating his former determination and
" confirming its force by a rescript of His late
" Majesty the Emperor, written in reply to
" a letter from His Highness, dated the 2nd
" of February, 1822, a copy of which was an-
" nexed, once more solemnly renounces the
" Throne, and giving up and abandoning the
" said Throne, according to the order provided
" for in the fundamental law, to Us and to Our
" issue. 2.) A rescript addressed by His High-
" ness to Us, in which, after repeating the same
" announcement of his will and pleasure, His
" Highness gives Us the title of Imperial Ma-
" jesty, while for himself he reserves his former
" style and appellation of Cesarèvitch, and

" qualifies himself as Our most faithful sub-
" ject.

" However clear and authentic might be
" these acts, however faithfully they may have
" represented His Highness's determination as
" absolute and irrevocable, We nevertheless re-
" garded it as conformable to Our own feelings
" and to the position of affairs to delay the pro-
" mulgation of them until such time as We
" could receive the final announcement of His
" Highness's pleasure with respect to the oath
" taken in his favour by Us and by the Empire.

" Now, having received also this final and
" definite announcement of His Highness's fixed
" and irrevocable pleasure, We hereby publicly
" proclaim and promulgate the same, appending
" hereunto: 1) A document addressed by His
" Imperial Highness the Cesarèvitch and Grand
" Duke Constantine Pàvlovitch to His late Ma-
" jesty the Emperor Alexander the First. 2)
" His Imperial Majesty's Rescript in answer to
" the above. 3) The Manifest of His Majesty
" the late Emperor, confirming His Highness's
" renunciation and designating Us heir apparent.
" 4) A letter from His Highness to Her Ma-
" jesty the Empress, our beloved Mother. 5)
" An official letter from His Highness to Ourself.

" In the spirit of all these acts, and in con-

" formity with the fundamental law of the
" Empire regulating the order of succession,
" with a heart overflowing with veneration, and
" humbly resigned to the unsearchable decrees
" of Providence, which has been our guide
" and protector, on ascending Our hereditary
" Throne of the Empire of All the Russias
" and the Thrones indivisible therefrom of the
" Kingdom of Poland and the Grand Duchy of
" Finland, we do hereby order and proclaim: 1)
" that the oath of fidelity and allegiance be
" taken to Us and to Our Heir Apparent His
" Imperial Highness the Grand Duke Alexander
" Nicholàevitch, our beloved son; 2) that the
" time of Our accession to the Throne be counted
" from the 19th day of November, 1825.

" Lastly, we invite all our faithful subjects
" to join Us in putting up their most ardent
" prayers to Almighty God, imploring Him to
" vouchsafe us strength to bear the burthen laid
" upon Us by His holy Providence, and to
" strengthen our good intentions: that we
" may live only for our beloved country, follow-
" ing the example of our ever-to-be-lamented
" Sovereign; that Our reign may be but a
" continuation of his, and that all those things
" may be fulfilled that for the good of Russia
" were desired by him, whose blessed memory

" will ever foster in Us both the zeal and the " hope of obtaining the blessing of God and the " love of our people."

The 13th of December fell upon a Sunday. In obedience to an order, alluded to a few pages back, given to Prince Lopukhìn, the Members of the Council of the Empire assembled, at eight o'clock in the evening, in an extraordinary meeting. Many of them were either entirely ignorant of what had taken place, or only able to conjecture from rumour what was about to happen: while those who were better informed than others regarded it as premature to give publicity to what was not sanctioned by an announcement emanating from supreme authority. When all were assembled, Lopukhìn informed them that this session was to be honoured by the presence of the " Grand " Dukes" Nicholas and Michael. But several hours passed in fruitless waiting, which only still farther aggravated and intensified the general feeling of anxious curiosity, and the Grand Dukes did not make their appearance. The Emperor was still expecting Michael Pàvlovitch, and the arrival of the latter, as turned out afterwards to be the case, had been delayed, notwithstanding the rapidity with which he had started and the speed with which he had

travelled, by the fact that the messenger sent for him had reached Nennal only at two o'clock in the afternoon of that same day, the 13th. Meanwhile midnight arrived. It had already been rumoured over the whole town that the Council had been convoked in an extraordinary meeting, and from the unusualness of the day of its assembling (Sunday), as well as from the lateness of the hour, everybody divined that at last something decisive must follow, and impatiently awaited the end of this wearisome uncertainty. It was impossible either any longer to defer or to hesitate. The Emperor, with a heart filled with regret, yielded to the unavoidable necessity of presenting himself to the Council without his brother. A message was therefore sent by him, that, as Michael Pàvlovitch might in all probability not arrive for some time longer, and as the business which was to be brought under the consideration of the Council was of a nature that did not allow of any delay, the "Grand Duke" Nicholas Pàvlovitch had determined to appear in the meeting alone. He had been remaining during this interval with the two Empresses; he now embraced them and presented himself to the Council.

From this point we will continue our narrative

in the words of the Journal of the Council. This document is curious not only in a historical point of view, but also from the very form in which it is drawn up, inasmuch as in the same act one and the same person is styled first "*Grand Duke*" and "*Highness*," and afterwards "*Emperor*" and "*Majesty*."

"His Majesty, on making his appearance in "the Council, after seating himself in the place "of the President and invoking the blessing "of the Almighty, opened the proceedings by "himself reading to the members the manifest "in which he assumed the Imperial dignity, in "consequence of the repeated renunciation of "that high title on the part of the Grand Duke "Constantine Pàvlovitch. The Council, having "listened to this manifest with every mark "of deep veneration, and after expressing, in "silence, its unaffected loyalty and devotion to "its new sovereign and emperor,* again directed "its attention to the reading of all the original "supplementary documents, explanatory of the "conduct of their Imperial Highnesses. When "this was done the Emperor ordered the

* When all the members, on the Emperor's beginning to read out the manifest, by an involuntary movement of respect rose from their seats, his Majesty also rose, and continued his reading on his legs. When he concluded, the whole Council made a low and respectful obeisance.

" functionary who was performing the duties of " Secretary of the Empire to read aloud the " communication made by the Grand Duke " Constantine Pàvlovitch to the President of the " Council, Prince Lopukhìn. After this paper " had been read to the members, His Majesty " was pleased to take back the document,* " and after handing to the Minister of Justice " the manifest, together with all its appendices, " which had just been read by His Majesty, was " pleased to command that the Council should " proceed without delay to the execution of the

* This communication (of the 3rd December) is the same document of which we have already spoken. It had been delivered by the feld-jäger who brought it, not to Lopukhìn, but to the Emperor himself, who, after causing it to be read to the Council, took it back, ordering that publicity should not be given to it, precisely on account of the peculiarly strong and even violent expressions which it contained. Ultimately, however, at the period of the first composition of the present narrative, it was impossible to discover, in spite of the most active search, either the original or the copy of the paper in question, and it was not till 1849, after the decease of his Imperial Highness of blessed memory the Grand Duke Michael Pàvlovitch, that there was found among His Highness's papers a copy of it, warranted as faithful, by a note in the handwriting of His Majesty the Emperor Nicholas Pàvlovitch. In the Appendix, No. I., will be found a copy of this document. The report of the Senate having taken the oath of allegiance was returned by the Cesarèvitch to the Minister of Justice, accompanied by a rescript dated the 8th December, and this latter paper was promulgated by the Senate on the 18th of that month (see Appendix No. II.). It is observable that the Cesarèvitch had made a considerable difference not only in the form and contents of these two papers, but even in the mode of their transmission: the rescript to Prince Lopukhìn was enclosed in a cover and addressed to the Emperor, while the rescript to Prince Lobanoff was sent directly to him.

" said acts, and to order them to be printed for " public information. After this His Majesty, " graciously saluting the members, was pleased " to quit the meeting of the Council at a little " before one o'clock in the morning. *Resolved:* " That this memorable event be inscribed in the " journal, testified, and preserved in the acts " of the Council of the Empire; it was also " resolved on the same day, viz. the 14th " December, that a solemn ceremony be per- " formed by the administration of an oath, in " the presence of God, of loyal and faithful " allegiance and devotion to His Majesty the " Emperor Nicholas Pàvlovitch, which was " immediately performed by the members of the " Council, and by the Acting Secretary of the " Empire, in the great chapel of the palace."

The Journals of the Council are always laid before the inspection of the Sovereign in what are technically called *memorials* or extracts; but this one was presented in the original, and on it was written, " Approved. Nicholas."

Thus terminated the *second* of these historical meetings of the Council of the Empire—the first word pronounced, in the character of a Sovereign, by the new Emperor. On no other occasion, either before or since, did the Council ever hold nocturnal sittings; on no other occa-

sion, too, did the Emperor Nicholas ever take his seat in that body in the President's chair.* This night—the starting-point of a new era in our annals—was destined, apparently, in every respect, to be different from all that preceded and from all that was to follow! † From the Council the Emperor returned to his own apartments; there, in prayer, were awaiting him his mother and his wife. It was now one o'clock in the morning; consequently Monday was already come, a day which was regarded by many as of very bad augury for the beginning of a reign. The young couple conducted the Empress-Mother to her own apartments, where the domestics, at Her Majesty's suggestion, were the first persons to congratulate the now Imperial pair. The late Grand Duchess has noted down in her private diary, that it was not a

* On subsequent occasions, when the late Emperor deigned to honour with his presence the meetings of the Council of the Empire, His Majesty always took his seat opposite the President, on the left hand side next the *rapporteur*, in the place set apart by the rules of the Council for the President of the Department of the Laws, who on these occasions moved his chair a little to the left.

† The members present at this meeting of the Council, in the order in which they signed the journal, were—Prince Lopukhìn, Prince Alexèi Kuràkin, Van-Desin, Mordvìnoff, Count Morkoff, Count Araktchèeff, Princes Dmìtrii and Yàkov Lobànoff-Rostòvskii, Count Miloràdovitch, Vassìlii Lanskòi, Pàshkoff, Tùtolmin, Kàrtsoff, Sùkin, Tatìstcheff, Hilarion Vassìltchikoff, Prince Alexander Golìtsin, Count Nesselrode, Shishkòff, Cancrìn, Prince Sèrgii Saltuikòff, Bolòtnikoff, Speràvskii,—in all 23 members.

time for congratulating, but rather for consoling and pitying them. These sentiments were shared by her husband. In the interior guard of the palace, taken from the soldiers of the Horse-Guards, before the Empress's apartments, there happened to be stationed one of the conspirators, Prince Odoèvskii. It was not till afterwards, when his share in the plot was discovered, that people remembered that he had addressed enquiries to the servants of the palace about what was going on—a circumstance which they had at the time attributed to mere curiosity.

On the same day, the 13th of December, the Emperor signed a letter to the Cesarèvitch which had been prepared by Speránskii at his order and from his hints, to the following effect:*—

"My dearest Brother!

"With a heart overwhelmed by sorrow, "and profoundly sympathising with Your "Highness under the severe affliction which "has fallen upon us both, I sought for consola- "tion in the thought that I should find in you,

* To this letter, as being a familiar and so to say *home* communication, publicity was not given. Nor was the Cesarèvitch's answer to it published; but it will be found at the end of our narrative in the Appendix, No. III.

" as my eldest brother, whom I have been ever " accustomed from my earliest youth to respect " and love with all my soul, a father and a " sovereign.

" Your Highness, in your letter of the 26th " of November, has deprived me of that conso- " lation. You have forbidden me to follow the " dictates of my heart, and have been pleased to " decline the oath of fidelity which I had taken " in your favour, not only in obedience to the " dictates of my duty, but with the sincerest " feelings of my soul.

" But Your Highness will not forbid, you " will not oppose, the feelings of devoted attach- " ment and that internal and mental oath of " allegiance which, after once swearing it, I " never can revoke, and which you yourself, out " of affection to me, will find it impossible to " refuse.

" Your Highness's commands are obeyed. I " have accepted the rank which you destined " me to occupy, and which, though designated " to the post by law, you have refused to take. " Your wishes are fulfilled!

" But permit me to retain the conviction that " he who, contrary to my expectations and my " desires, has placed me in this laborious and " difficult path, will be my guide and my in-

" structor in following it. This is an obligation
" which, in the sight of God, you cannot decline;
" you cannot renounce that power which has
" been entrusted to you, as my elder brother, by
" Providence itself, and to obey which, in an
" allegiance *of the heart*, will ever be for me the
" greatest happiness of life.

" With these sentiments I conclude my letter,
" imploring the Almighty in His goodness to
" preserve your life, which is so invaluable
" to me.

" Your Imperial Highness's
" *Sincerely loyal and dutiful,*
" NICHOLAS."

The imperial couple retired to rest, and—their slumber was undisturbed; with a conscience clear and unstained in the sight of God they resigned themselves, from the bottom of their hearts, to His unsearchable decrees.

The 14th of December was arrived.

The Emperor rose early. He felt a presentiment of the approaching danger; but he awaited it with the tranquillity of innocence and courage. As one out of many proofs of

this we will quote the following letter to the Grand Duchess Mària Pàvlovna, written by him, in great haste, on this morning previous to the revolt in the regiments :*—

"St. Pétersbourg, 14 Décembre, 1825.

" Priez Dieu pour moi, chère et bonne " Marie. Prenez pitié d'un malheureux frère, " victime de la volonté de Dieu et de ses deux " frères.

" Tant que j'ai pu éloigner de moi ce calice, " j'en ai prié la Providence et j'ai fait ce que " mon cœur et mon devoir me dictaient.

" Constantin, mon Empereur, a repoussé le " serment que moi et toute la Russie lui de- " vaient : j'étais son sujet ; j'ai dû lui obéir.

" Notre ange doit être content, sa volonté est " faite, toute amère, toute affreuse qu'elle est " pour moi.

" Priez Dieu, je le répète, pour votre mal- " heureux frère : il a besoin de cette consolation " et plaignez-le !

" NICOLAS."

To General Aide-de-Camp Benkendorff,† who

* This letter is borrowed from a work by M. S. Vòlkoff, the publication of which is authorised by the Emperor Alexander Nicholàevitch, and in which it is admitted by the permission of the Grand Duchess Mària Pàvlovna.

† He died in 1844, a Count, Member of the Council of the Empire,

was admitted to His Majesty's morning toilette, the Emperor said, "By this evening, perhaps, "neither of us will be alive; but at least we "will die doing our duty." Then, after receiving General. Vòinoff, the Emperor, at 7 o'clock, came out into the saloon of the apartments he at that time occupied, where were now assembled the Chiefs of Division and Commanders of the brigades, regiments, and separate battalions of the Guard. In the first place he explained to them that, yielding to the positive commands of his elder brother, to whom he had not long before sworn allegiance together with them, he was now obliged to accept the throne, as the next legitimate heir by birth after the person who had renounced it: then, after reading to them the manifest and the acts appended to it, he enquired whether any one entertained any doubts? All present unanimously replied that they felt none whatever, and that they recognised him as their lawful Monarch. Then, retiring a step or two backwards, the Emperor —with that air and dignity which still live in the memory of all those who were witnesses of that never-to-be-forgotten moment—said, "After this you will answer with your heads for

Chef of the Gendarmes, and Commandant of the Imperial Head-Quarters.

"the tranquillity of the capital; and as to "myself, if I am to be Emperor only for one "hour, I will show myself worthy of being so." In conclusion he ordered all the commanding officers then present to go to the Etat Major (Staff) to take the oath,* and from thence they were immediately to proceed to the troops under their command, to administer the oath to them, and to report the execution of these orders. At the same time were assembling, in their respective places of meeting, to hear the reading of the manifest and to take the oath, the Synod and the Senate, and messengers were sent round that all persons who had the right of *entrée* at court were to assemble at the Winter Palace at 11 o'clock to be present at the celebration of a solemn thanksgiving.†

Soon after the commanding officers of the Guard Count Miloràdovitch had also arrived at the palace. The information received from Taganròg, the denunciation of Rostòvtsoff, nay, the very rumours of the city, could not fail to excite the most serious apprehensions; but the

* The ceremony was performed in the round saloon of the Library.

† This was shortly after countermanded, and, in order to give time to terminate the administration of the oath to the troops, orders were issued for assembling at 2 o'clock. But the new notice did not reach many persons, and consequently the saloons of the Winter Palace were beginning to fill as early as 11 o'clock.

Military General-Governor still continued obstinately to affirm the contrary. The town, he said, is perfectly tranquil, and, after repeating this assertion in the presence of the Empress Mària Feòdorovna, he added that, nevertheless, whatever might happen, all the necessary measures of precaution had been taken. Subsequent events proved how devoid of foundation these assurances were, and how weak and ineffectual were the arrangements made by the local authorities. The city was swarming with conspirators, and yet not one of them had been observed, much less seized; they had their places of meeting, and yet the police affirmed that all was quiet. Besides this there was a concurrence of other strange blunders, which it is difficult to explain at present, and which would have been at any time quite sufficient to agitate the mind of the public even under ordinary circumstances. Thus, for example, at the Mass on the 14th December, at the altars of all the churches of the capital the name of the new Emperor had been proclaimed after the Litany, while the manifest, in which the change was announced and its causes explained, was read *after Mass*, before the Te Deum. On the other hand, care was not taken to disperse and distribute among the people a sufficient number of

printed copies of this act, while at the same time criers were selling about the streets copies of the new oath, but *without the manifest*, that is, without a key to its meaning. The manifest itself it was almost impossible on that morning to buy for money, particularly later, when the rebels—as our narrative will by-and-bye relate—prevented all access to the Senate, and consequently to its printing-house and book-shop. Let us once more repeat in this place, everything appeared to concur in leading to an outbreak, which was necessary, in the merciful and impenetrable designs of a beneficent Providence, in order that with it might be crushed for ever the seeds from which its conflagration drew its fuel!

The first of the regimental commandants who arrived to report the administration of the oath was the Commander of the Horse-Regiment of the Life-Guards, General Aide-de-Camp Orloff.* "They are both of them fine fellows!" cried the soldiers, when the Commandant of the Regiment explained to them, before the oath was administered, the conduct and proceedings of the Imperial brothers. The example given by a regiment known for its peculiar attachment to

* Now Prince, and President of the Council of the Empire and of the Committee of Ministers.

its *Chef*, the Cesarèvitch Constantine, seemed to offer a confirmation of the assertions made by the Governor of the capital, and served as a kind of pledge that the oath would be taken without difficulty in the other regiments as well.* But at the very same moment, when the greater part of the troops was taking the oath in the most complete order, and while the immense majority of the population of the capital was either with loyal fervour pronouncing or preparing to pronounce a vow of eternal fidelity to a Monarch who with such abnegation of self and with such pure intentions had consented to place upon his head the crown of his ancestors, a small band of individuals, ill-intentioned or led away by others, deceiving or deceived, was striving to profane these solemn moments with civil bloodshed, and with a crime equally foul in itself and unknown to our holy Russia. . . . . .

By degrees reports came in of the oath having been administered to the following regiments:— the Chevalier Guard, Preobrajènskii, Semeònovskii, Pàvlovskii, the Chasseurs, and that of

* In the regiment of Horse-Guards, however, there arose some hesitation on the part of the regimental priest (chaplain) Poliakòff, long since dead. When Orlòff ordered him to read the oath to the soldiers, he, restrained by some doubt or hesitation as to what had taken place, stopped short and refused to proceed. Then Orlòff snatched out of his hand the printed form of the oath and himself read it in a loud voice.

Finland, and the Battalion of Sappers of the Guard. From the others no intelligence had yet arrived, but this was attributed to the distance of their barracks. Suddenly arrived at the palace General Sukhozanèt,* commanding the Artillery of the Guard, with intelligence that, when he had led to the oath the 1st Brigade, several officers in the Horse Artillery had demanded, previous to their swearing allegiance, a personal assurance on the part of the Grand Duke Michael Pàvlovitch, whom they imagined, or purposely gave out to have been removed from Petersburg, as if in consequence of his refusal to consent to the accession of Nicholas Pàvlovitch. From this cause the non-commissioned officers and men had also refused to take the oath: but order, Sukhozanèt affirmed, had been re-established, even before his arrival on the spot, by Colonel Herbel, Captain Pistohlkors, and Second-Captain Count Kùsheleff; the officers, however, who had disappeared in the confusion, he knew not whither, he had ordered, as they returned home, to be put under arrest. "Return those officers their sabres," said the Emperor: "I do not wish to know their names; "but you will answer to me for everything."

* Now General of Artillery, General Aide-de-Camp, and member of the Council of War.

Fortunately at this very moment arrived the long expected Grand Duke Michael Pàvlovitch.* The Emperor instantly sent him to the Horse-Artillery barracks. The appearance of the Grand Duke gave evident delight to everybody there: the soldiers were still further convinced that it was nothing but an attempt to shake them in the fulfilment of their duty of lawful obedience, and the oath was taken by all ranks in proper order. A few minutes after Sukhozanèt there rushed into the Emperor's presence, in extreme agitation, Neidhardt, chief of the Staff of the Guard:—"Sire!" he cried, in a voice almost inarticulate from haste, "le régi-"ment de Moscou est en pleine insurrection. "Chenchine et Frédéricks† sont grièvement "blessés, et les mutins marchent vers le Sénat.

* At a little before 12 o'clock, says the Kammer-Fourrier's journal. It is worthy of remark that only the very limited number of the persons most closely connected with the Court knew of the Grand Duke's having been so long detained at Nennal, while everybody else, that is, the whole town, were confident that he was with Constantine Pàvlovitch. Such was the opinion even of the domestics serving in the apartments; for in the Kammer-Fourrier's journal we find the following entry:—"At a little before 12 was pleased to "arrive from *Warsaw* His Imperial Highness the Grand Duke Michael "Pàvlovitch."

† Shenshín, at that time commanding a brigade, subsequently General Aide-de-Camp and Commander of the 1st Foot Division of the Guard, died in 1831. Baron Freedericks, brother to the officer mentioned in a preceding page, at that time Commandant of the Moscow Regiment of Life-Guards, afterwards Grand Equerry, died in 1855.

" J'ai à peine pu les devancer pour venir vous " le dire. De grâce, ordonnez au premier ba- " taillon Préobrajensky et à la Garde à Cheval * " de marcher contre."

In reality the Moscow regiment was in a state of open mutiny. Two of the officers of this regiment, with other individuals of the same way of thinking, had succeeded in prevailing upon the soldiers not to take the oath. " It is " all a trick," said they; " they are forcing us " to take the oath, and Constantine has not re- " nounced: he is in chains, and Michael Pàvlo- " vitch, the chef of the regiment, too." † At the same time Alexander Bestùjeff, Aide-de-Camp to Duke Alexander of Würtemberg, who hap-

* These regiments, from the position of their barracks, were nearest to the Winter Palace, and consequently most at hand.

† The criminal intentions of these two officers had been exhibited previously, on the night of the 13-14th December. A portion of the Moscow regiment was occupying the various guardhouses in the town, and near the Narva barrier was stationed Second Lieutenant Kùsheleff (now Lieutenant-General and Chief of the 1st Foot Division). Here remained all night, to await the arrival of the Grand Duke Michael Pàvlovitch, one of the Aides-de-Camp of the new Emperor, Vassìlii Alexèevitch Peròvskii (now Count, General Aide-de-Camp, and Member of the Council of the Empire). Entering into conversation with Kùsheleff respecting the topic which was occupying everybody's attention, he thought it his duty to relate to him all the details he knew respecting the manifest, the new oath of allegiance, &c. Suddenly Kùsheleff was called out of the guardhouse into the street by these two officers, who had driven out there to prevail upon him not to swear allegiance to Nicholas Pàvlovitch. But Kùsheleff, who had already learned the truth from what Peròvskii had told him, refused to yield to their suggestions, and even restrained his men from insubordination.

pened also to be there, gave out that he had been sent from Warsaw with orders not to allow the troops to take the oath. "The Tsar Con-"stantine," cried the conspirators, "loves our "regiment, and is going to add to our pay: if "anybody is not faithful to him, run that man "through." They ordered the soldiers to load their muskets and to take ball-cartridge, deprived the grenadiers of the colours that had been brought out for the ceremony of the oath, and one of the above-specified officers wounded with his sabre, first General Freederickz, then General Shenshìn, who both fell insensible to the ground,—inflicted several blows on Colonel Khvòstchinskii,* and also wounded a grenadier and a non-commissioned officer who attempted to resist him. At last a part of the regiment, led by him, ran out of the barracks, and, with colours displayed and cries of "Hurrah!" carrying with them by force all the officers and soldiers they met, streamed out in complete disorder to the Square of the Senate. Behind and around it ran a crowd of people, also shouting "Hurrah for Constantine!"—an acclamation which for this mob, which had not read the manifest, had still all the force of a lawful devotion. Another

* Subsequently Lieutenant-General, attached to the Establishments for Military Education.

portion of the regiment, though restrained by its officers and still remaining in the barracks, nevertheless obstinately continued to refuse the oath.

The Emperor was deeply affected by the intelligence that Neidhardt had brought. It was self-evident at the very first glance that this was not a simple misunderstanding on the subject of the new oath, but the fruit of that conspiracy, as yet undetected by the government, the first information respecting which had been furnished at Taganròg; that the pretended repugnance to take the new oath, on the ground of its involving a perjury, was a mere pretext under which the conspirators had succeeded in seducing from his duty the Russian soldier, always so conscientiously faithful to his engagement; lastly, that the men, deceived by the phantom of legality held up to their imagination, and thinking that they were fulfilling and maintaining the plain duty of the service, were acting, in the hands of the rebels, merely as the instrument of quite different projects. It was no less obvious, that a single moment of hesitation or weakness might transform what was as yet only an inconsiderable spark into a dangerous conflagration. Without an instant's delay, therefore, the Emperor made appropriate arrangements. He

ordered Neidhardt, for the purpose of re-establishing order in that part of the Moscow regiment which had remained in barracks, to move the Semeònovskii regiment, which was nearest to it, in that direction, and to order the Horse Guard to hold itself in readiness, but not to come out; at the same time he commanded Major-General Strèkaloff,* who was attached to his person, to bring to the Winter Palace the 1st battalion of the Preobrajènskii regiment, which then, as at present, occupied the barracks in the Milliònnaia; lastly he sent his Aide-de-Camp, Alexander Alexàndrovitch Kavèlin,† to the Anitchkin Palace, where his children were, and to bring them instantly to the Winter Palace. He also commanded Flügel-Adjutant Bibikoff,‡ then attached to the Secretary's Room, to take steps for having a charger got ready for him. This done, making the sign of the cross and giving himself to the Divine Will, the Emperor determined to present himself in person on the

* Died in 1856, Actual Privy Councillor and Senator in Moscow.

† Afterwards General-Aide-de-Camp, during some time Military General-Governor of St. Petersburg, and ultimately Member of the Council of the Empire, of the Committee of the 18th August, 1814, and of the Council of the Military Establishments for Education. He died in 1850.

‡ At that period Director of the Chancery of the Chief of the Staff, and now Lieutenant-General and President of the Court-Martial in the Ordonnance-Haus at Moscow.

scene of danger. "Il y a hésitation à l'Artil-"lerie," said he, as he passed through his wife's apartment, and he did not add a word more, although he internally doubted whether he should ever see her again in this world. She had begun to dress for prayers, when suddenly entered the Empress Mària Feòdorovna, in extreme agitation, and with the words, "Pas "de toilette, mon enfant; il y a désordre, ré-"volte." . . . .

In the mean time the Emperor, wearing the uniform of the Izmàilovskii Regiment, and his broad ribbon over his shoulder, just as he had been dressing for chapel, and even without throwing on his cloak, had descended the stairs to the main guardhouse of the palace. When opposite what was called Saltuikòff Staircase he met the Commander of the Chevalier Guard Regiment, Flügel-Adjutant Count Apraxin, and while descending the stairs themselves General Voìnoff, who appeared quite to have lost his presence of mind. The former he ordered to bring up his regiment: the second—a man respectable for his courage, but of very limited capacity, and who had not succeeded in acquiring the least weight with the Guard—he severely reminded that his place was among the troops who had thrown off their subordination,

and who had been confided to his command. The party who had just taken its turn of duty to mount guard at the main-guard house of the palace was a detachment of the 6th Chasseur Company of the Finland Regiment of Life-Guards, with Staff-Captain Pribùtkoff, Lieutenant Gretch, and Ensign Boissel* in command of the party. The sentries were just being relieved, and therefore only a part of the detachment were present. When the party turned out to salute him, the Emperor ordered the salute to be given with the colours, and the drums to beat to quarters. Thus this was the *first body of troops* which saluted Nicholas Pàvlovitch as Emperor, and this the *first standard* that was lowered before him in his new dignity. The Emperor said good morning † to the soldiers, and enquired whether they had sworn allegiance

* In the Kammer-Fourrier's journal, which however is, generally speaking, tolerably inexact in the description of this day, which however may easily be explained by the general confusion, it is said that the guard was from the Chasseur Regiment of Life-Guards.

† In Russia, when the Emperor or any superior officer appears before the troops, it is the custom for him to salute them with "Zdràstvuete, rebiàta!" ("Good morning," or rather "Hail, "children!") The soldiers reply with a loud cry—which they are carefully drilled to utter in exact unison—"Zdràvie jelàem, Vashe "Imperàtorskoe Velìtchestvo!" ("We wish you health, Your "Imperial Majesty!") The title is of course varied according to the rank of the individual. When the Emperor or superior officer expresses his satisfaction on any point, the troops indicate their gratitude by a similarly well-prepared shout of "Ràdui staràtsia!" ("We are glad to do our best!")—*Translator.*

to him yet, and whether they knew that the oath was in strict accordance with the wishes of his brother Constantine Pàvlovitch? "We "have sworn, and we know it," was the answer.* "My boys," continued he, "now is the time to "show your fidelity in earnest: the Moscow- "men are playing tricks; don't you imitate "them, but do your duty like fine fellows. Are "you ready to die for me?" Upon this question being answered by an affirmative acclamation, the Emperor ordered them to load, and then, turning to the officers, he said, "You, "gentlemen, I know, and therefore I shall say "nothing to you." He then gave the word of command himself: "Division, forward, quick "time, march!" He placed himself at the head of the detachment, and led it, left shoulder

* The oath had been administered to the Finland Regiment, before the guard had been detached from it, in the presence of the Commandant of Brigade, Golovìn (now Member of the Council of the Empire), with the exception of His Highness's Carabineer Company, which had not yet returned to quarters from guard-duty, in which it had been engaged on the 13th. On proceeding, for the same purpose of administering the oath, to another regiment of his brigade, the Chasseurs of the Life-Guard, Golovìn had ordered the Commandant of the Finland regiment, Voropànoff, as soon as the men had all kissed the crucifix, to detach a fresh town-guard, then to dismiss the regiment, and after that to wait for the arrival of His Highness's Company, which, the moment it returned to barracks, he was to cause to swear. But Voropànoff performed only the first of these orders, and, without waiting for the company, hurried off to the levee at the palace. We shall presently see what were the consequences of this negligence.

forward, to the principal gateway of the palace. The whole square in front of the building was dotted over with the equipages of persons driving up to the levee and with a crowd of the curious and the sight-seeing. Many of these persons ventured to peep into the court-yard of the palace, and some of them, on seeing the Emperor, came forward out of the throng and saluted him by bowing to the ground.

While leading the guard through the archway of the palace the Emperor observed among these latter individuals Colonel Khvòstchinskii in the act of entering, wounded and covered with blood, whom he ordered to retire to some place out of sight, lest his appearance might still further excite the angry passions of the spectators. Then, causing the guard to draw up in line in front of the gateway, but on the outside, he advanced alone into the square—completely alone, for Adlerberg, the Aide-de-Camp who had hitherto remained with him, had been sent to hasten the arrival of the 1st battalion of the Preobrajènskii Regiment. On catching sight of the Emperor, the people began to crowd towards him from all directions, with cries of "Hurrah!" To give time for the troops to assemble, it was indispensable to divert the attention of the crowd by something extraordi-

nary. "Have you read my manifest?" the Emperor began to enquire of the people who surrounded him. The majority answered in the negative. He then took a printed copy from some one in the throng, and himself began reading it aloud, slowly and deliberately, with frequent pauses, and explaining almost every word. The listeners with joyful cries threw up their caps. To many of them the affair appeared to be completely new. Up to that moment, in consequence of a report that had been circulated of the existence of a revolt in the Moscow regiment, there had been merely rumours that a part of the troops had remained faithful to Constantine Pàvlovitch, and had refused to take the oath to any one else; but the reasons why that oath *ought* and must be taken to another, was what no one had thought of explaining to the people, either by verbal arguments or even by the mere reading of the manifest: for in the churches, in consequence of its being an ordinary working-day, the number of the persons who had heard it read had been exceedingly small; and even the morning service on this day, in consequence of the administration of the oath in the tribunals and public offices, had been for the most part celebrated much later than usual. Hardly had the Emperor

concluded the reading of the manifest, when Neidhardt galloped back with intelligence that the revolted companies of the Moscow regiment had already occupied the Square in front of the Senate.* The Emperor listened to the report with the most perfect tranquillity, and instantly communicated it to the people in a few concise, condensed words. . . . . The enormous throng, after the explanation it had just heard from the Emperor's own lips, in an instant comprehended and appreciated the whole affair. It closed up into a solid mass round its Tsar, and a multitude of voices exclaimed that they would not let anybody get at him to hurt him, that they would tear them all to pieces, that they would never give him up. At this moment there came close up to the Emperor two men in plain clothes, with the cross of St. George at

* The enormous open space, to which I have given the name of "square," for want of a more exact English word, is an irregular area, bearing generally the form of a very produced oblong, bounded on the North side by the Winter Palace, a small parade-ground, the huge Admiralty, and a large open space extending to the Neva, formerly crossed here by a bridge of boats, now removed; on the W. by the gigantic façade of the Senate and the Synod, divided by a boulevard (formerly a canal) from the exercise-house of the Horse-Guards; on the S. by the Isaac-Cathedral, a row of houses pierced by two streets diverging in straight lines from the central spire of the Admiralty on the opposite side, the semicircular sweep of the Etat-Major; and on the E. by the Etat-Major of the Guard. A single glance at a plan of Petersburg will do more to render intelligible the details of the narrative than the most elaborate description.—*Translator.*

their buttonholes. "We know, Your Majesty," said one of them, "what is going on in the "town; but we are old wounded soldiers, and "as long as we are alive you shall never be "touched by the hand of a traitor!" They were retired officers, Verìgin and Bedriàga. Others seized the Emperor by the hands, by the skirts of his uniform, fell on the ground and kissed his feet. The Russian people on that occasion fully exhibited its innate adoration of its Tsars, that holy, that patriarchal passion which from olden times has given such strength to our Russia. But at the first word of the Tsar, "My children!" this tossing ocean was tranquillised again, and became instantly calm and motionless. "My children," said the Emperor, "I cannot kiss you all, but this is for every "one of you." He embraced and kissed those who were nearest to him, who were, so to say, lying against his breast;* and for several

* In the archives of the Imperial Public Library there is a curious document relative to this moment, namely a letter addressed to the Emperor Nicholas I., under date of the 13th August, 1850, by Lukà Tchesnokòff, a burgess of Klintsoff, in the department of Suràjsk, Government of Tchernigoff. In offering to His Majesty's acceptance an ancient MS., he wrote,—"In 1825, December 14th, at "Your Majesty's accession to the hereditary throne of your fathers, "and on Your first look upon your loyal subjects in the Winter "Palace, near the chief guardhouse, I, with fervent and unaffected "love to my Imperial Lord and Master, was honoured with Your "Majesty's most gracious fatherly embrace and affable and conde-

seconds, in the dead silence of those voiceless thousands, nothing was heard but the sound of kisses. The people were sharing among them the kiss of their Tsar! Again raising his voice, the Emperor began to say that the duty of quelling the disturbance belonged to the authorities; that no private person was to dare to interfere, either by word or deed, in whatever might take place; that he should judge of their love and devotedness by their tranquillity and strict obedience to the orders of those who alone knew what was to be done. Lastly, terminating his address by advising them to go home, the Emperor said, "Now give us room;" and with the greatest order and in silence the crowd retreated to the edges of the square, clearing that area in front of the palace which was to be occupied by the approaching battalion of the Preobrajènskii Regiment of the Life-Guard.

Honoured with the particular attention of its late Emperor and benefactor, the Preobrajènskii regiment had been deeply and sincerely afflicted by his loss. But the malcontents had made an

"scending conversation, and was the *first* to enjoy the high honour of "Your Imperial kiss and the promise of Your great and most Impe- "rial kindness."

attempt to act even upon this regiment—though ever noted as a model of fidelity. On the evening of the 13th of December, the 2nd Company of the 1st Battalion, which was composed of young soldiers, was unexpectedly visited by an unknown officer, in the uniform of an Aide-de-Camp. After flattering the non-commissioned officers and soldiers by assuring them that the whole Guard expected them to set the example, and was awaiting their authority, he proceeded to speak in terms of the strongest reprehension of the oath which was ordered to be administered on the next morning, and added, that he had determined to sacrifice himself in order to save the first of Russian regiments from the guilt of perjury. A serjeant-major,* a man of sense and decision, after instantly sending notice to the authorities of what was going on, prevailed upon the officer to discontinue his narrative; and the soldiers, driven at length out of patience by his insolence, informed him that they would not let him go. By a singular fatality, there did not happen to be a single one of the commanding-officers in barracks at the moment, and consequently the serjeant-major's

* Dmìtrii Kossiakòff, subsequently Police-Master at Pàvlovsk: he afterwards retired from the service, and died in the rank of Colonel.

message was obeyed by the officer on duty with the battalion, a person who had not long before been sent from a Line-regiment to do duty with the guard, and who happened to have been a schoolfellow of the officer just alluded to in the Page-Corps. The stranger who had been endeavouring to sow revolt greeted him with complaints of the pretended insolence with which the soldiers had treated him, and threatened to report to the commanding officer the negligence of the officer on duty, who, alarmed at this, ordered the soldiers to release the stranger, and accompanied him out of the barracks with excuses and apologies. The Serjeant-major, however, afterwards reported what had taken place to his Captain, who lodged opposite the barracks. The criminal was sought for and arrested that very night, and his attempt at seduction remained without effect on the minds of the soldiers. On the morning of the 14th of December the battalions took the oath: the 1st, after the manifest had been read to them by Shenshìn, Commander of Brigade, in the exercise-house of the palace; and the 2nd in the courtyard of the barracks of the battalion, near the Tauride Garden.* Strèkaloff, who had been

* The 3rd Battalion, which was in cantonments in the neighbourhood of Tsàrskoe Selò, took the oath afterwards, by companies.

sent to bring up the 1st battalion, found the men quite quiet, and even in undress; he therefore ordered them to put on their full uniform; but Adlerberg, who arrived soon after, took upon himself, in order to save time, to take them out, not in uniform, but only in their great-coats, and hastened to report to the Emperor, whom he found in the Palace Square, alone, as before, at the very moment when the people were retiring from around him. Adlerberg was speedily followed by General Aide-de-Camp Golenìstcheff-Kutùzoff, and by Colonel Molostvòff, Aide-de-Camp to Prince Eugène of Würtemberg. The Emperor ordered the Commandant of St. Petersburg, Lieutenant-General Bâshùtzkii,* to join the main guard, which was drawn up before the gateway of the Palace, and not to move without special orders, and himself proceeded to the Preobrajènskii battalion, which, having got ready and arrived with indescribable rapidity, was now drawn up with the Commandant's Entrance to the Palace in its rear, the exercise-house on its left flank, and its right flank almost reaching to the principal gateway of the palace. It was under the command of Colonel Mikùlin, †

* After performing the duties of Commandant for thirty years, he demanded permission to retire in 1833, and died in 1836, in the rank of General-Aide-de-Camp and Senator.

† Died in 1841, General-Aide-de-Camp, attached to the Guard.

and there also was present the Regimental Commandant, Major-General Islènieff.*

At this moment, on the other side of the Winter Palace, there drove up, almost in secret, a common hackney-coach. It contained him who, by the accession of his father, was called to the dignity of Heir-Apparent to the Russian throne—the Grand Duke Alexander Nicholaèvitch. Kavèlin had found him at the Anìtchkin Palace—the young Grand Duchesses had already been transported to the Winter Palace—occupied in colouring a lithographic print, representing the passage of the Granicus by Alexander the Great.† . . . For greater security he was conveyed, together with Flügel-Adjutant Merder, who was attached to him as governor, in a hired carriage. Having performed this commission, Kavèlin was immediately entrusted by the Emperor with another, namely, to bring up those companies of the Pàvlovskii Regiment of the Life-Guard which were not on duty in the guardhouses. Of these there proved to be three, and Kavèlin, in order to cover the palace, posted two of these in the Milliònnaia, near the

* Died in 1851, General-Aide-de-Camp, Inspector of the Reserve Battalions of the Guard and of the Grenadiers, and Member of the Committee of the 18th Aug. 1814.

† This engraving is still preserved by His Majesty the Emperor, in the same state as it then was.

bridge over the Winter Palace Canal, and the third near the other bridge on the Palace Quay.

When the Emperor approached the Preobrajènskii battalion, the men saluted him. He rapidly passed along the front, and then with a loud, clear, resounding voice he said: "After "the renunciation of my brother Constantine "Pàvlovitch, you have sworn allegiance to me as "your lawful Sovereign, and you have taken a "solemn oath to stand by me and by my House "to the last drop of your blood. Remember— "an oath is a serious thing. I now call upon "you to fulfil your promise. I know that I "have enemies, but God will help me to manage "them." The question, whether they were ready to follow him wherever he should order, was answered by a thundering shout of "Glad "to do our best!" The looks and the whole air of the soldiers exhibited a calm and, as the Emperor afterwards phrased it, *granite* expression of a deep feeling of their duty. The Emperor embraced Islènieff and Mikùlin. He was enraptured with this—undoubtedly the *first* battalion in the world, which, at so remarkable a moment, fully exhibited its fidelity and devotion. At that moment came up Count Miloràdovitch, whom nobody had seen since the morning.

"Cela va mal, Sire," said he; "ils entourent le "monument;* mais je m'en vais leur parler." The Emperor did not allow a word of reproach to escape him, in spite of all the Count's previous assurances of the pretended tranquillity of the capital. "You, Count, have long commanded "the Guard," answered he; "the soldiers know "you, love and respect you: go and speak to "them, show them that they have been inten- "tionally led into error: they will believe you "sooner than another." Miloràdovitch departed. Providence had already decreed his doom, and the new Emperor was destined to see him but once again—in rendering him the last honours. Continuing in the mean time to remain on foot, and still, as before, in his uniform, without a cloak, the Emperor gave the word of command to the Preobrajènskii Regiment, according to the regulations of that day: "To the charge, in "column, 4th and 5th companies forward, "double quick time, march!" and wheeling the column, almost from the place where it stood, left shoulders forward, in the direction of the Admiralty Square, he halted it opposite the angle of the Etat Major, which was then in course of

* The monument of Peter the Great, on the Senate Square. Miloràdovitch's words referred to the revolted portion of the Moscow Regiment.

construction, and was surrounded by a wooden hoarding. Here they brought him a charger, and as he mounted he accidentally remarked coming out from behind the hoarding a Staff-Officer, whose melancholy part in the history of the conspiracy was soon to be discovered. At this moment were heard in the direction of the Senate Square the reports of several musket-shots, the cause of which we shall presently relate. The Emperor enquired of Colonel Mikùlin if the men's muskets were loaded, and on receiving an answer in the negative he ordered them to charge with ball-cartridge, to throw out skirmishers on the flanks, and commanded Regimental Commandant Islènieff, with three fusilier companies, to proceed to the Senate Square, and there to halt with his right flank towards the Admiralty Boulevard, opposite the Prince Lobànoff's house, which is now the Ministry of War. Then, addressing himself to his own Company, which still remained in its former position, and as if calling to his recollection his new dignity, he said, "His Majesty's Company "remains with me." In this manner the company just mentioned, under the command of Captain Ignàtieff,* enjoyed the happy fortune

* Subsequently General *de jour* of the Etat Major; now General-

of following all the first movements of the Emperor, and the tradition of its having done so lives in its ranks even to the present day, though there no longer remains among them a single person who formed part of it on that occasion.* Followed by this one company, and attended, in addition to Kutùzoff and Adlerberg, by Strèkaloff, Peròvskii, and Flügel-Adjutant Durnòvo, to whom were soon added Generals Aides-de-Camp Prince Trubetzkòi and Count Komaròvskii, the Emperor moved on after the fusilier companies, in the direction of the Senate Square, stopping, however, several times on the road to give orders and to hear reports; at this time many persons, as well official as private individuals, were freely admitted to speak with him. In this manner, at the corner of the Nèvskii Perspective, an officer of the Nijegoròdskii Regiment of Dragoons came up to him. He wore a black bandage round his head; his great black eyes and long moustaches gave to his exterior an air of a remarkably strange and repulsive character. On asking him his name and hearing in reply

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Aide-de-Camp, Member of the Council of the Empire, and Military General-Governor of St. Petersburg.●

* Nor did the Emperor Nicholas on his side fail, down to the end of his life, to entertain a peculiar attachment to the 1st Battalion, and, generally, to the whole Preobrajènskii Regiment, affectionately calling it on all occasions "My family."

the appellation of Yakubòvitch, which had been retained in his recollection in consequence of Count Miloràdovitch's favourable mention of it on several occasions, the Emperor enquired what he wanted? "I have been *with them*," insolently answered the conspirator; "but, "hearing that they are for Constantine, I have "left them and come to you." "Thank you," replied the Emperor—"you have learned what is "your duty, and I will now give you the oppor- "tunity of wiping out the past. Go back to "your people and try to reason with them and "recall them to their obedience, unless, however, "you are afraid of the danger." "This is a "proof that I am no coward," replied Yakubò- vitch, pointing to his bandaged head. "Bravo, "bravo!" exclaimed from behind the voice of Flügel-Adjutant Durnòvo. The Emperor cut short this inopportune outburst with a severe remark. It was afterwards discovered that Yakubòvitch, under the pretence of returning to his lawful duty, had been only endeavouring to obtain intelligence of what was going on in the ranks opposed to the conspirators, in order to act as circumstances might require.

While continuing to advance slowly, the Emperor sent, first his old groom Lònduireff, who was attending him on horseback, and after-

wards Peròvskii, for the Horse-Guards. Out of the whole number of the revolted troops, the Senate Square was as yet occupied only by that portion of the Moscow Regiment to which we have alluded some pages back, and which, with cries of "Hurrah for Constantine!" had thrown out a chain of sentries, who allowed no one to pass. For Peròvskii, however, who drove up in a sledge, the soldiers made way; and though the mob from behind the hoarding round the Isaac-Cathedral pelted him, though without knowing what they were doing, with stones, yet he succeeded in executing the orders which had been given him. Orloff hurried off to the barracks. While the word of command was being passed for the men to dress and saddle the horses, far in front went Prince Odòevskii, who had just been relieved from mounting guard in the interior of the Palace, and who, as was afterwards related, said to the men, "There is plenty of time; no "need to hurry." On the appearance of Orloff in person, however, this notwithstanding caused no delay, and, when the men finished saddling the horses, he himself proceeded on horseback to the Senate Bridge, to reconnoitre the position of the insurgents. He was immediately recognised there, and from their ranks were heard cries of, "There is Orloff coming out with the

" brazen-heads;" * and one clerk in the Senate, who happened to be in the crowd there, seized him by the leg and implored him to ride no further, if he did not want to be killed. On returning to the barracks, Orloff ordered the trumpets to sound the alarm. At this moment Miloràdovitch drove up. After his interview, which we have described, with the Emperor, in the Palace Square, he had hastened, on foot, to the place where the insurgents were assembled. On his way thither he had been met by the Upper Police Superintendent Shulgìn. Miloràdovitch, having requested him to alight from his sledge, got into it himself and galloped off with his Aide-de-Camp, Bashùtzkii (the son of the Commandant), to the Senate Square; but he was not so fortunate as Peròvskii had been. Beyond the corner of the boulevard it was impossible to make way any further through the dense mass of people which thronged the whole area up to the monument of Peter the Great, the pedestal of which had been chosen by the leaders of the insurrection as a basis of operations for the accomplishment of their treason. Miloràdovitch was obliged to drive round, over the Blue Bridge, along the Mòika Canal to the Kissing Bridge,

* Alluding to the brass helmets of this corps.—*Translator.*

and from thence to the Horse-Guards, where he met Orlòff. "Allons ensemble parler aux "mutins," said he to the latter, with an evidently agitated manner. "J'en viens," replied Orlòff; "et croyez-moi, Monsieur le Comte, n'y allez "pas. Ces gens ont besoin de commettre un "crime; ne leur en donnez pas l'occasion. Quant "à moi, je ne peux, ni ne dois vous suivre: ma "place est avec la troupe que je commande et "que je dois conduire auprès de l'Empereur, "comme j'en ai l'ordre." "Que serait-ce donc "qu'un Gouverneur-Général qui ne saurait ré-"pandre son sang quand le sang doit couler!" exclaimed Miloràdovitch, mounting a horse which he had taken from Orlòff's Aide-de-Camp, Bakhmètieff, and riding into the Square. He was followed, on foot, by Bashùtskii alone. They struggled through the crowd and stopped at about ten paces from the revolted soldiers. The people gave way before the horse, thus clearing a space in front, but thronging densely on the three other sides. Here the old warrior, the hero of Lecco, Amstetten, Borodinò, Kràsnoe, Culm, Brienne, La Fère Champenoise, was at last on his true stage. Brave, fearless, accustomed to speak to the Russian soldier, respected by him, he burst out into a powerful harangue, and at last, to prove that he would have been incapable

of betraying the Cesarèvitch Constantine, he drew from the scabbard the sword which he had received from him as a present; he turned the blade towards the insurgents and began to show it to them, and read in a loud voice the words that were inscribed upon it, "To my friend "Miloràdovitch." All this, together with his famous name, his valiant look, his breast covered with stars, and which had remained unviolated by a wound after fifty battles, acted powerfully on the soldiers: they stood drawn up to their full height, with shouldered firelocks, and gazing timidly in his face. But suddenly the raised arms of Miloràdovitch sank like lead to his sides, the trunk bent heavily over, the horse gave a leap forward, and the rider fell into Bashùtskii's arms. Kakhòvskii, a retired lieutenant, who was standing, disguised, in the crowd behind the Count's horse, glided up to him, and discharged a pistol, with the muzzle almost touching him, into his side, just under the cross attached to the cordon of St. Andrew which he wore.* At the very instant that Miloràdovitch fell, several

* Besides this inevitably mortal wound, Miloràdovitch received another tolerably deep one from a bayonet in the back. On the trial of the rebels it was discovered that the latter had been inflicted, at the same instant as Kakhòvskii's shot, by another officer, who affirmed, however, that he had only intended to wound the horse, in order to oblige the Count to retire.

musket-shots were fired, and the bullets whistled from the ranks of the insurgents into the crowd that stood behind him. This circumstance has always remained inexplicable; but it may be that the insurgents, for a moment restored to reason by Miloràdovitch's words, under the still recent impression produced by them, sent these shots against his assassins. Bashùtskii, with the assistance of two common people whom he then and there called out of the crowd, carried the dying man to the Horse-Guards' barracks, as the nearest place of safety. All this passed so quickly that Orlòff was still occupied in drawing up the soldiers there as they rode out of their quarters. "It is a pity I did not listen to you," whispered Miloràdovitch, as they carried him past.

The Regiment got into motion for its place of destination.*

We have already spoken of shots heard by the Emperor when he halted at the Etat-Major.

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* There were only four squadrons present. The remaining two, in consequence of the want of room in the barracks, were at the Semeònovskii barracks, where was the forage depot, and they arrived afterwards, as we shall relate in due order.

They were those that were fired after the fall of Miloràdovitch. Immediately after intelligence was brought to the Emperor of the Count having been wounded, by Flügel-Adjutant Prince Andrèi Galìtzin, who came running up from the Senate Square. The Emperor, with evident grief, was conversing with the persons of his suite who were surrounding him, on the melancholy occurrences of the day; and then, turning to the people that were thronging around, he endeavoured to persuade them to retire. "They will fire at me," said he, "and you "may be hit. I don't want anybody to suffer "for me. Go to your homes; to-morrow you "shall know how it ended." "Put on your "caps," added he, addressing those who were standing bare-headed; "you will catch cold!" And when many turned round, and, as they walked, began to cross themselves, he said, "That's right, that's well! pray to God, and "to-morrow we will meet again here." Then the Emperor called to him Captain Ignàtieff, and addressed him as follows:—"I know the "devotion of your company to my late brother, "and I cannot think of any better recompense "for it than by giving it his last Preobrajènskii "uniform and his cipher upon their epaulettes." This favour was instantly announced to the

men, and diffused an inconceivable rapture. All with one voice cried out, "Glad to die for Your "Majesty!"*

In gradually marching forwards, the Emperor had by this time reached the extremity of the Admiralty Square, and had arrived at the angle formed by the prolongation of the line of the Voznessènskii Street and the house of Lobànoff, the site of the present Ministry of War. At this moment came up the Horse Guards. Having passed round the back of the Isaac-Cathedral on the side of the Blue Bridge, and coming out upon the street which then existed between the bridge and the above house, the regiment halted in line, with its rear to the house, in column of squadrons. The Emperor approached the ranks and saluted the soldiers, who loudly

* Here we may remark a circumstance serving to prove that many persons implicated in the conspiracy had no knowledge of the insurrection organised for the 14th December, and would not have been willing to share in it. To the company just mentioned was temporarily attached an Ensign belonging to another regiment, who was also a member of the conspiracy. On hearing of the favour promised by the Emperor, he came up to the Captain and endeavoured to prevail upon him then and there to use his intercession with His Majesty to extend to him also the right of wearing the cipher of the late Sovereign. Ignàtieff, ordering him to return to his place, promised at a proper opportunity to report the subject to the authorities. This same officer, who passed the whole night at the bivouac with the company, till its return to quarters, zealously performed his duties, very little anticipating that soon after he was to be arrested as an accomplice in the conspiracy.

replied to his greeting: "We wish you good "health, Your Imperial Majesty!" After this he asked them whether they recognised him as their Sovereign? and when, in reply to this question, from all ranks drawn up in line resounded a hearty and long-continued shout of, "Hurrah! Long life to Your Imperial Ma-"jesty!" he said—"I require no new assur-"ances of your devotion; you have ever faith-"fully served all your lawful Tsars. The first uni-"form that I ever wore was yours; and though "I was then only a child, yet it was with great "regret that I exchanged it with my brother "Constantine." After this address he ordered the regiment to go to the Senate Square. On one side of that area at that time extended a line of hoardings, surrounding the Isaac Church, and reaching nearly to the private houses which stood on the site of the present Holy Synod: another—the opposite—side of the Square was then encumbered with large quantities of stones for building which had been unloaded at this spot, in such a manner that there was a distance of not more than fifty paces to the monument of Peter the Great, from the place where the Horse Guards now halted. Advancing to this space in ranks of six men in each, the regiment drew up in two lines, with its right

flank directed towards the monument, and its left almost close up to the hoarding. The revolted companies of the Moscow regiment stood, on the other hand, in a dense irregular column, with its rear to the building occupied by the Senate. The general physiognomy of the Square and of the insurgent crowd—as is related by an eye-witness, who accidentally passed that way in the course of his morning walk—offered a spectacle as singular as unusual. There were figures such as are never to be seen in Petersburg, at least in masses: old frieze cloaks with a multitude of capes; respectable-looking cloaks, such as are worn by civilians, and peasants' caps upon the heads of the wearers; sheepskin coats with round hats, white towels instead of girdles, and so on—a whole masquerade of vice and debauchery meditating crime. The soldiers, unbuttoned, with their caps on the backs of their heads, with their accoutrements huddled on in disorder, were for the greater part drunk. In the midst of them fluttered one of the colours of the Moscow Regiment, and close to it, on horseback, apparently against his will, sate a gendarme of the police—*taken prisoner*, as the mob that stood around, laughing, related. All this crowd filled the air with wild and deafening yells, with incoherent conversation, amid which was heard

from time to time a distinct cry of "Hurrah for "Constantine Pàvlovitch!" The soldiers were warming themselves by stamping and beating their arms against their sides; some of them wanted to eat, and they sent to the guard-house at the Senate to ask for bread. Whether from fear of being too much crowded, or from a presentiment of their fate and a wish to spare others, two or three non-commissioned officers kept continually driving back the people from the neighbourhood of the column, and saying that, if they were to die, they, the Moscow-men, would die alone, and that the people had no business to be running their heads into danger. Alexander Bestùjeff, Ruilèeff, and several other persons with whom our spectator was unacquainted, in the above-described fantastic costumes, flitted through the ranks from time to time. Bestùjeff alone was in uniform; with this single exception there was not in the whole place any one to be seen who the least resembled in his dress either an officer or a leader. Suddenly several shots were heard, which destroyed all desire on the part of our informant to continue his observations.

The shots had been fired at General Vòinoff, who had begun making an attempt to reason with the revolters. They had done him no

harm; but Flügel-Adjutant Bibikoff, who had been sent by the Emperor to discover the reason of the delay in the arrival of the Brigade * of the Seamen of the Guard, which he had ordered to be brought up, was seized and severely beaten while in the act of making his way through the chain of sentries posted by the insurgents. On recovering a little from the blows, and escaping with difficulty from his assailants, he now drove, in an izvòztchik's sledge, round the back of the Isaac-Church, in order to report to the Emperor that the Brigade of Seamen of the Guard, respecting which no reliable intelligence had hitherto been received, had joined the rebellious mass of the Moscow Regiment. It afterwards was ascertained that the sailors, seduced into error, like the soldiers of that regiment, by certain of their officers, had from the very first absolutely refused to swear; and that, although Brigade-Commandant Shipòff † had ordered under arrest the officers commanding the companies, the latter had been released by the seamen. But when they had begun to

* It is well known that the sailors in the Russian fleet are armed, dressed, and disciplined as soldiers: they are divided into "equipages," which correspond to regiments, and form in a certain sense the respective crews of the ships when at sea.—*Translator.*

† Now General-Aide-de-Camp and Senator, with an unlimited leave of absence.

fire in the Senate Square after Miloràdovitch was wounded, the greater part of the sailors, with the cry of "Boys, do you hear the firing?" rushed out of their barracks, in spite of all the efforts of their commanding officer, 2nd Captain Katchàloff,* who endeavoured in the very gateway to restrain the fugitives. This fresh crowd, on arriving close to the Moscow Regiment, drew up in front of the latter, at right angles to its right flank. On finding that such a powerful reinforcement had been received by the rebels, the Emperor found it indispensable to cut off their communication with the Vassìlievskii Ostroff, and to cover the right flank of the Horse-Guard, for which purpose he detached the Preobrajènskii Company, which had remained with him, and ordered Prince Eugène of Würtemberg to place it near the Isaac Bridge, but with a command that Ignàtieff, in case of the company being fired at, should on no account return a shot till he should receive particular instructions to do so. Prince Eugène drew up his horse till he reared almost upright, and then, turning his bridle, he said, with indignation, "Cela ne servira à rien." At the same time messages were sent for other troops,

* Died in 1855, an Admiral and Member of the Council of Admiralty.

and the Emperor himself, with General Aide-de-Camp Benkendorff, rode out to the Senate Square to examine more closely the assemblage of the insurgents. And they received him with musket-shots. . . . . .

Now, in order to give clearness and completeness to our narrative, we must throw a retrospective glance on preceding events.

The Grand Duke Michael Pàvlovitch, after quelling the insubordination which had broken out in the morning in the Horse-Artillery, was returning to the Winter Palace, when, on traversing the parade-ground of the Preobrajènskii regiment, he met a special courier, with intelligence of what had taken place in the Moscow Regiment. By the time that he had galloped thither, a part of one battalion had already been seduced by the malcontents to the Senate Square, and a portion of the other was not yet returned from guard-duty, which it had been performing since the preceding day; so that, out of both battalions, there remained not more than four companies on the spot. They were assembled in the barrack-yard, and before them stood the priest, in full canonicals, by the moveable altar-

desk, while backwards and forwards walked in great embarrassment Generals Vòinoff and Bös-trom, who had already exhausted all modes of persuasion. At the sight of the Grand Duke the soldiers began to shout Hurrah, and to enquire how it was that they had been assured that His Highness was in chains? "You see, "consequently, that you have been foully de-"ceived," answered he; and, after explaining to them all that had taken place in its true light, he enquired whether they were now ready, as their duty required, to take the oath of allegi-ance to their lawful Sovereign, Nicholas Pàvlo-vitch? "Glad to do our best!" shouted in answer the soldiers, now recovered from their error. "If so," continued the Grand Duke, "then, for a greater proof that you have been "deceived, and that you have heard from me "nothing but the simple truth, I will myself "take the oath with you." And in fact, after ordering the officers to repeat the words of the oath after the priest, and to go through the ranks to see that the non-commissioned-officers and men pronounced it, Michael Pàvlovitch stood by the desk, and there, in the barrack-yard, in the open air, amid the soldiers, took the vow of allegiance and fidelity to his brother, —the first act of the kind that he had performed

in his whole life. "Now, boys," said he, "if "there have been found scoundrels who have "disgraced your uniform, now is the time to "prove that there are also honest men among "you who mean to perform what they have "sworn, and who are ready to wash out this "stain with their blood." "Glad to do our "best!" again resounded on all sides, and the whole of the four companies, with their officers, unhesitatingly obeying the word of command, marched, in perfect order, out of the gate of the barracks, from whence the Grand Duke led them, along the Gorókhovaia to the Senate Square. I say, *led* them, in the strictest sense of the word, because, in consequence of his recent arrival in Petersburg, his people had not had time, and indeed did not know where, to bring him a riding-horse. Completely restored to reason by the words of the Grand Duke, this portion of the Moscow Regiment reached to Admiralty Square precisely at the moment

* The law of 1797 lays down, that, on the solemn announcement of the attainment of their majority by persons belonging by blood to the Imperial House, they shall swear, in presence of the Monarch, fidelity to him and to their country, and to maintain the rules of the succession and the established family order. But on attaining of their majority by the Grand Dukes Nicholas and Michael, there had been no solemn announcement, and consequently they had never taken the oath. Nicholas Pávlovitch took the oath, for the first time, to his brother Constantine, and Michael Pávlovitch—on the above-described occasion.

when the Emperor returned from the assemblage of insurgents who had received him with musket-shots. The officers rushed forward to kiss his hands and feet, and earnestly implored permission to redeem that instant with their blood the disgrace that had fallen upon the regiment. The Emperor was still repugnant to the idea of shedding blood, but, in testimony of his confidence in the repentance of the detachment that had just arrived, he posted it at the angle of the hoarding before the Isaac-Church, opposite the insurgents. Michael Pàvlovitch, to whom the Emperor now gave his horse, expressed the desire of going into the ranks of the revolters, with a few of the oldest and most respected soldiers of the faithful part of the regiment, in order to act upon the former by his own personal presence and by the example of their comrades. The Emperor, however, in consideration of the evident danger, did not permit the performance of this generous proposal. It was in vain that the Grand Duke repeated several times with much warmth, "Let me go in-"stantly, Your Majesty, let me take the colours "from them." The Emperor answered, "No, "remain here." In the mean time General Aide-de-Camp Vassìltchikoff had joined His Majesty, and the Regiment of Chevalier-Guards

and the 2nd Battalion of the Preobrajènskii Regiment had come up. Leaving the Chevalier-Guards in reserve on the Admiralty Square, the Emperor ordered the 2nd Preobrajènskii battalion, together with the three companies of the 1st, to close up, ranks to the right, to the Horse Guards, and sent General Aide-de-Camp Count Komaròvskii to the Vassìlievskii Ostroff for the 1st battalion of the Finland Regiment of the Life-Guard, which had been ordered to occupy the Isaac Bridge; while, in order to prevent the dispersion of the rebels in other directions, he ordered those companies of the Pàvlovskii Regiment which, on the first news of the disturbance, had been posted by Kavèlin near the Winter Palace, to be brought up to the Galèrnaia Street, by making a circuit along the Post-Office Street and across the Kriùkoff Canal; at the same time the position which remained unoccupied between the Isaac Cathedral and the Riding-house of the Horse-Guards was to be taken up by the Semeònovskii Regiment, which would thus be posted on the right flank of the insurgents. But as the latter regiment had not yet come up, the Emperor dispatched his brother to hasten its arrival, and then to take under his command the division which would in that case be formed on the other side of the Isaac Cathe-

dral. The Grand Duke met the Semeònovskii Regiment already on the Red Bridge, and led it to the appointed place, where, however, from the want of room, he was obliged to draw it up one battalion behind another, exactly opposite to the revolted part of the Brigade of Seamen of the Guard, which was standing directly in front of it.

There was another regiment, too, which had not yet arrived on the scene of action, a regiment which in every respect was regarded with strong attachment by the Emperor, who, while Grand Duke, had been its Chef, and then Brigade, and subsequently Division-Commandant: this was the Izmàilovskii Regiment. Kavèlin had long before, immediately after the posting of the Pàvlovskii Companies near the Winter Palace, been sent to bring it up, in the event, of course, of its being in a tranquil state. But neither the messenger nor the regiment had yet appeared. This delay was subsequently explained in the following manner. On driving up to the barracks, Kavèlin heard from the Brigade-Commandant Martuìnoff,* that, when the oath was administered to the 2nd Grenadier Company, several voices had pronounced the

* Died in 1838, General-Aide-de-Camp and Commandant of St. Petersburg.

name of Constantine. Kavèlin—before being appointed one of the Aides-de-Camp to Nicholas Pàvlovitch, himself an officer in the Izmàilovskii Regiment—was desirous of ascertaining the disposition of the men's minds by a personal examination of the company; but as, after the administration of the oath, one squad had started to carry the colours to the palace, he addressed himself to the Commander of the Company, Bogdanòvitch, with the enquiry whether he would answer with his life that the men would do their duty? Bogdanòvitch, without the least hesitation, replied that he could answer for them; and added, that the cries of "Constan-" tine," at the taking of the oath, had been uttered only by a few young officers in the rear of the regiment. Kavèlin, nevertheless, waited till the return of the squad, and himself, accompanied by Simànskii, the Commanding officer of the regiment, went through the company, which was half composed of Grenadiers of the 3rd Company, of which he had once been commandant. Then addressing himself to the men, he said that there were bad reports afloat about them, but that he could not bring himself to believe them, knowing the men's excellent service on former occasions, as well as their attachment to their old commanders, who

had never deceived them. All the soldiers, likewise affirming that the cries of "Constan-" tine" had not come from them, but from the young officers, answered with a unanimous and enthusiastic demand to be led wherever the authorities pleased. In consequence of this the regiment was brought out, and General Aide-de-Camp Levashòff, who had been sent by the Emperor to learn the reason of the delay, found it in the most complete order. Kavèlin and Martuìnoff themselves went with the men. For greater assurance, the latter ordered two non-commissioned officers who could be depended upon to keep a secret watch over the officers who had attracted suspicion, but who, however, also marched in their places.

But even before the Izmàilovskii Regiment had time to arrive upon the scene of action, the proceedings there had in many respects taken a different turn.

The obstinacy of the insurgents, who, in spite of the imposing mass of troops by which they were surrounded, still continued standing immovable on the place they occupied; the attack upon Miloràdovitch's life; their violent assaults

upon many persons who had fallen into their hands; their firing at General Vòinoff and others, and ultimately at the Emperor himself—all this unfortunately showed the necessity of having recourse to more energetic and decisive measures. Prince Eugène of Würtemberg advised the experiment of an attack of cavalry, as the means of crushing and dispersing the assemblage of obstinate rebels. The Emperor himself gave the word of command to the Horse-Guards: "For God and the Tsar, quick "march!" and Orlòff led it, in divisions, against the insurgent column. But as there happened to be a very little snow on the square, the horses, which had not yet been winter-shod, slipped upon the frozen stones of the pavement; the men had not their sabres sharpened; and besides this, in consequence of the narrowness of the space, the rebels, being in a dense mass, had all the advantages on their side. The first attack, and several others which were made after it, remained unsuccessful. On the contrary, by the rolling fire with which the insurgents received every charge of the Horse-Guards, many of the latter were wounded, and among their number Colonel Velho,* who lost his arm. Orlòff, seeing

* Now Lieutenant-General and Commandant of the town of Tsàrskoe-Selò.

the impossibility of cutting his way into the rebels, gave the word of command, "Dress up, "back!" and led his divisions to their former post, remaining, however, as they retired, with his face towards the rebels, in order to observe their movements. This proceeding, however, was far from being without important results. There had galloped up at this moment from its barracks a division of the Horse-Pioneers of the Life-Guard and of the 1st Horse-Pioneer squadrons, under the command of Colonel Sass,* and this body, simultaneously with the attacks we have just been describing, dashed from the angle of the Horse-Guards' Riding-School to the flank of the rebels, and succeeded in forcing its way, along the front of the Senate, through the crowd, to the Isaac Bridge, where it ranged in line with the right flank of the Emperor's Company of the Preobrajènskii Regiment. In this movement it was followed by the two remaining squadrons of the Horse Regiment of Life-Guards, which had been quartered, as specified some pages back, in the Semeònovskii barracks, and had for that reason arrived later than the others. This charge made by Sass was so rapid and bold, that in the Preobrajènskii

* Died in 1857, in the rank of General-Aide-de-Camp.

Company his detachment had at first been taken for the enemy.*

The failure of the cavalry attack suggested the employment of artillery, at least for the purpose of terrifying the rebels by its appearance. In order to gain time, several persons proposed sending for the horse-artillery; but, after the hesitation which had occurred among those troops that morning, the Emperor preferred the foot. Observing among the spectators one of the officers of the latter corps, Lieutenant Bulùigin, he ordered him to drive off to the barracks for the guns and to the laboratory for cartridges, and after him he sent, with the same message to General Sukhozanèt, Dejour-General Potàpoff; while he himself proceeded back to the Palace

* Though during the whole time of this attack the bullets were whistling about the Horse-Pioneers, the only persons killed were a non-commissioned officer, remarkable from the circumstance that at the formation of the Squadron of Horse-Pioneers he had been the first man who was presented, as a sample of the uniform and equipment, to the late Emperor, and one rank-and-file. Sass had a fine horse killed under him, by its skull being smashed in by a drunken peasant. The animal had not long before been presented to him by the Grand Duke Nicholas Pàvlovitch. At the same time a non-commissioned officer of the Moscow Regiment, likewise drunk, tried to bayonet him in the right side, but Sass succeeded in parrying the thrust, and with his sabre knocked out the non-commissioned officer's eye. In the crowd of the rebels voices were heard crying "Kill Sass! drag him off "his horse; he is the chief favourite of Nicholas Pàvlovitch!" In the Emperor's company of the Preobrajènskii, over which, during the repulse of the cavalry charges by the rebels, the balls were flying in swarms, there was not a man either killed or wounded.

Square, in order to take measures for securing the safety of the Winter Palace, where, before this time, he had ordered the guard to be reinforced by the two Sapper battalions, namely, that of the Guard and that designated the Squadron of Instruction.* While traversing on

* The orders sent to the battalion of Sappers of the Guard to proceed to the Winter Palace had been received from two different quarters. Even before the termination of the ceremony of taking the oath, when one squad, under the command of Captain Kvashnìn-Samàrin, which had been sent with the colours to the Anìtchkin Palace, had returned to barracks, two officers of Horse-Artillery, driving by at full speed in a sledge, stopped it on its road, and with the words "Don't take the oath, my good fellows—they are cheating "you," were out of sight in an instant. But Kvashnìn-Samàrin reminded the men of their duty being unconditional obedience to their commanding-officers, and brought the squad, in perfect order, to the yard of the battalion, where the oath was just about to be administered. At the hour fixed for the divine service at the Palace, all the officers, except those commanding companies, who remained by a particular arrangement in barracks, drove off to the Winter Palace. Here the Commandant of the battalion, Colonel Guerrois,[a] heard that the Emperor, in consequence of some disturbances or other, was then on the square, but, not knowing what was the matter, he proceeded for orders to the Chief of the Staff of the Guard. Neidhardt asked him if he could answer for his battalion, and, on receiving for reply, "I answer for them, as for myself," he ordered him to lead his battalion to the Winter Palace, and to take up his position in the principal court-yard. While this was going on in the palace, Flügel-Adjutant Prince Galìtzin brought the same order from the Emperor direct to the barracks. Guerrois being absent, the messenger was received by the senior commandant of a company, Captain Vìtovtoff (now General-Aide-de-Camp and Commandant of the 1st Corps of the Army). He ordered ball-cartridge to be dis-

[a] Guerrois was the last person appointed Flügel-Adjutant by the Emperor Alexander, and, having received this rank just before the departure of His Majesty for Taganròg, he had not even had an opportunity for expressing his gratitude for the favour. He died in 1852, in the rank of General-Aide-de-Camp, and Member of the Council of War and of the Committee of the 18th of August, 1814.

horseback this distance the Emperor was again surrounded by the crowd, and again approached by a variety of individuals, with expressions of their devotion. Among them was Karamzìn. He had arrived for the Te Deum which was appointed to take place at the palace, and both the Empresses, who were thirsting every instant for news from the scene of action, entreated him to go into the square and find out, by a closer examination, what was going on. On coming out, in consequence of this request, just as he had presented himself at court, in powder, uniform, and silk stockings, Karamzìn had put on a fur-pelisse and warm boots, but without a hat,* made his way along the boulevard, and from thence, through the crowd of spectators, came to make his bow to the Emperor. Besides the historian, the then Hanoverian Ambassador at our court, the aged Count Dörnberg, presented himself before His Majesty. The foreign Ministers, who had assembled on the boulevard, at first out of simple curiosity, had deputed the venerable old man to entreat permission for them to join the

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tributed to the men, and instantly led the battalion, at double-quick march, so that he met Guerrois close to the exercising-house of the Winter Palace, from whence they all proceeded together to the appointed post in the principal court.

* At that time civilians, with full uniform, carried under their arm flexible (Opera) hats, which could not be put on the head.

Emperor's suite, as a still more powerful confirmation before the people of the legality of his rights. After very graciously receiving the communication made by Dörnberg, Nicholas Pàvlovitch requested him, after thanking his colleagues, to tell them, "que cette scène était une affaire de "famille, à laquelle l'Europe n'avait rien à "démêler." This reply was much admired by the Russians who were standing round, and gave the foreign diplomatists the first idea of the character of the new monarch.

But amid all these assurances of attachment the heart of the young Tsar was soon to experience a fresh affliction, as unforeseen as were all the other proceedings of that day.

Of all the troops composing the Grenadier Regiment of the Life-Guard, two companies of the 1st battalion had mounted guard on the 14th December in the Fortress of St. Peter and St. Paul, while the two others and the whole of the 2nd battalion were at the regimental barrack on the Petersburg side.* When that part of the regiment which was on the spot,† in presence of its regimental commandant Stürler, began to

* One of the remoter quarters of St. Petersburg, situated on the North (or opposite) side of the Neva.

† The 3rd battalion of this, as of the other regiments, was in cantonments out of town.

take the oath, Second-Lieutenant Kojèvnikoff, in a state of intoxication, ran out into the gallery of the officers' quarters which faced the yard, and, leaning over the railing, cried out to the soldiers, "Why are you forgetting the oath you "took to Constantine? Whom are you swearing "to? It's all a trick!" He was instantly seized and placed under arrest; after which the administration of the oath proceeded with regularity. But when the soldiers had sat down to dinner, and the officers began to drive off to the Te Deum at the palace, the officer commanding the 1st Fusilier Company, and who had already taken the oath with the others, came among them with the words, "Comrades, we "have been wrong to obey; the other regiments "have refused to swear and have assembled in the "Senate-Square. Dress yourselves, load your "firelocks, follow me, and we won't give in! "Your pay I have in my pocket: I will dis-"tribute it without an order." The company, accustomed to a blind obedience to its commander, followed him almost entire, though in great disorder, over the regimental parade-ground, through the gateway into the street. Colonel Stürler, who had been delayed in setting off for the palace, learning what was going on, jumped into the first izvòztchik's sledge he met with,

and galloped off after the runaways. He came up with them in the Dvoriànskaia-Street, and endeavoured to prevail upon them to return; but the words and cries of the commander of the company overpowered all the Colonel's powers of persuasion. The company ran to the Vassìlievskii Island, and from thence, over the Isaac Bridge, to the Senate Square, and Stürler had nothing left but to return to the barracks, where, in obedience to the order which had in the mean time been sent by the Emperor, that the regiment should hold itself in immediate readiness, he ordered the portion which remained to dress and march out in front of the barracks. Then the Adjutant of the 2nd Battalion, Lieutenant Pànoff, who had also taken the oath, knowing that the other officers had gone away, began to run from company to company, assuring the men that they would get into a scrape with the other regiments and with Constantine Pàvlovitch; but the soldiers would not listen to his suggestions. Unfortunately, while they were drawing up, in obedience to the orders of the Regimental Commandant, in front of the barracks, the rattle of musketry was borne on the wind from the Senate Square. Pànoff took advantage of this to use new persuasions to induce them to go over to the Emperor Constan-

tine's side, and his words were beginning to produce some hesitation in the ranks. Remarking this, he threw himself into the middle of the column, and with a loud and exciting cry of "Hurrah," led away several companies after the 1st Fusiliers, though by a different road, viz. through the Great Milliònnaia and the Palace Square. On the road he was struck by the suggestion of a horrible idea—that of making himself master of the Winter Palace, and, in case of resistance, of destroying the whole of the Imperial Family that was then in it. With this intention he advanced to the principal gateway of the Palace. Here the Commandant Bashùtskii, taking the body led by Pànoff, which was still marching in a certain degree of order, for a fresh detachment sent by the Emperor for the protection of the palace, himself ordered the guard of the Finland Life-Guard Regiment to divide and admit the passage of the arriving troops. Nothing but the Divine Mercy prevented the execution of the atrocious project. The revolters, with Pànoff at their head, began boldly to march into the courtyard, but there already stood, just arrived, and just drawing up into column, the Battalion of Sappers of the Guard. One of the officers of the Grenadiers of the Life-Guard who had arrived at the palace for the Te Deum, Lieu-

tenant Baron Zaltza,* observing from a window that the non-commissioned officers and men of his regiment were entering the courtyard, ran down stairs and began to enquire of the soldiers how they came there. "We don't know any-"thing about it," answered they; "it was Lieu-"tenant Pànoff that brought us." Then Zaltza addressed himself to Pànoff, who, with his head leaning on his hand, seemed plunged in meditation upon something important. On being asked what was the meaning of all this, he raised his drawn sword and cried, "Leave me alone!" and then, when Zaltza continued to demand an explanation, he said, "If you don't retire, I "will order the men to kill you with the butts of "their firelocks." Pànoff's confusion arose from the unexpected obstacle which he had encountered in the palace-court. The arrival of the Sapper battalion, by anticipating Pànoff's plan, had defeated his design. Waving his sword and shouting, "Why, these are not our people; "follow me, boys!" he wheeled his men round, and dashed back with them through the principal gateway to the right. Zaltza followed them. On one side, on the square was standing up in his sledge the Regimental Commandant Stürler,

* Now Lieutenant-General and 1st Commandant of Revel.

who, calling him up to him, said, "Endeavour "to save the colours; Pànoff has made the regi- "ment mutiny." Upon the departure of the Grenadiers of the Life-Guard, all the exterior approaches to the palace were instantly occupied by reinforced posts of the battalion of Sappers of the Life-Guard, and over and above them the 1st Company of Miners was drawn up at the principal gate, the 1st Squad of the 1st Company of Sappers at the Emperor's own entry, and the 2nd Squad of the 2nd Company of Sappers at the Ambassadors' entry (that facing the Nevà). If a delay only *of a few minutes* had taken place in the arrival and occupation of the courtyard of the Winter Palace by this battalion, there can be no doubt that Pànoff, finding himself opposed only by a weak party of the Finland Regiment, might have executed his diabolical project, with all its incalculable results, almost without resistance! . . . . .

The Emperor, who knew nothing of what had taken place, was riding, as we have already mentioned, back towards the Winter Palace. In front of the building of the Etat-Major he was met by the body whose movements we have been describing, with its colours, but without officers, and in complete disorganisation. In some degree of doubt, but still without sus-

pecting the truth, he endeavoured to stop the soldiers and draw them up into some order. On his command of "Halt!" they cried out, "We "are for Constantine!" "In that case, there "is your road," coolly replied the Emperor, pointing with his hand to the Senate Square, and commanding the troops to make room to let the Grenadiers of the Life-Guard pass between them. The latter, streaming past him on both sides of his horse, soon mingled with the rest of the insurgents. It was evidently Providence itself that inspired the Emperor with this idea. By preventing the possibility of scattered attacks on the part of the rebels, suddenly occurring at various points, and at the same time scenes of bloodshed under the windows of the palace, and by concentrating their whole assemblage into one spot, and thereby facilitating their ultimate defeat, this step alone, it may be said, decided the fate of the day. This blessed thought, and the miraculous escape, a moment before, of the Imperial family, furnish an evident and dazzling proof of the protection of Providence vouchsafed by Almighty God to the reign which was then dawning. Nor can we refrain in this place from stopping for an instant to admire with pious veneration the other manifestations of Providential interference which on that day were

shown amid treason and perjury, in those exploits of true valour with which it inspired the defenders of the righteous cause. Thus, in that same regiment of the Grenadiers of the Life-Guard, the Commander of His Majesty's company, Captain Prince Mestchèrskii, overtaking the soldiers on their way, persuaded almost all the men of his own company, which was deserting with the rest, to return to their duty, through the confidence which they had in him, and bringing them, together with the chasseur squad of the same company, which had been previously recalled to reason by the firmness of Second Lieutenant Tutolmìn, to the Emperor.* Thus, too, the guard from the Finland Regiment of the Life-Guard, under the command of Second Lieutenant Nassàkin 1st, which was on duty at the post of the Senate—and consequently surrounded by the insurgents, whose rear reached close up to the platform of the guardhouse—stood bravely under arms the whole time. Refusing to listen either to the threats or to the persuasions of the mutineers, the guard remained to the last immovable in the performance of its duty, and even presented arms whenever the

* In reward the Emperor gave Mestchèrskii with this company a post of honour, by joining him to the Sappers in the defence of the Winter Palace.

Emperor appeared in sight, and every two hours detaching the usual relief-parties, which passed through the squares of the rebels to the post near Lobànoff's house and returned by the same road to the guardhouse, keeping up all the order of discipline.* Thus another guard of the same regiment, under the command of Lieutenant Seyffarth, appointed to do duty at the Admiralty, being stopped on the road by the revolted companies of the Moscow Regiment, which were hurrying towards the Senate Square, beat them off by force, and arrived at his appointed post.† Besides those which remained in modest obscurity, there were many other brilliant exploits on this day, which must have poured the balm of consolation into the wounded heart of the Emperor. We will notice among the latter the following, in addition to those already quoted. Colonel Stürler, when a portion of his regiment had been seduced into revolt by the persuasions of Pànoff and his comrade,

* The Emperor, *on the very same evening*, sent for Nassàkin into his presence, and conferred upon him the rank of Lieutenant and the order of St. Vladimir of the military 4th class. The superior of this guard was the non-commissioned officer Feòdor Vòlkoff. It is worthy of remark that the prisoners then under detention in the Senate Guardhouse, according to the assertion of one of their number, never made the slightest attempt at escape.

† Seyffarth, subsequently a Major-General and Chief of the Staff of the Corps of Internal Police, was rewarded with the cross of St. Anne of the 4th class.

showed absolute contempt for the evident danger in the execution of his duties, and, in his efforts to recall to subordination those who had thrown off their obedience, went into their ranks on the Senate Square: nothing but a mortal wound, inflicted by the bullet of the same assassin by whose hand Miloràdovitch had previously fallen, could arrest him in his career of loyalty.* Lieutenant Zaltza, in executing the orders, to which we have already alluded, of his Regimental Commander, succeeded in stopping, when the mutineers had gone as far as the Palace Square, the colour-serjeant Pivovàroff, who, without the least resistance, gave up the colours to him, and, together with him, forcing his way through the crowd, ran up towards the Nèvskii Perspective. But the grenadiers who came up with them, by order from Pànoff, after inflicting on Zaltza several blows with the butts of their muskets, dragged the colours out of his hands and restored them to Pivovàroff. A little farther on, how-

* Encountering Stürler in the midst of the assemblage of the rebels, close to the monument of Peter the Great, Kakhòvskii asked him in French, "And you, Colonel, on which side are you?" "I "have taken the oath to the Emperor Nicholas, and shall remain "faithful to him," replied Stürler. Then Kakhòvskii fired at him with a pistol, and another officer cried out, "Boys! cut him to "pieces! run him through!"—himself at the same time giving him two strokes with his sabre on the head. Stürler, mortally wounded, staggered forward a few steps, stumbled, and fell. He was carried to Lobànoff's house, where he expired on the following day.

ever, Zaltza and Pivovàroff, who continued to carry the colours, succeeded in separating from the crowd, though not for a long time, because the soldiers, as on the first occasion, again hustled the standard-bearer into the midst of them and no longer gave him an opportunity of escape. Captain Vìtovtoff, of the Battalion of Sappers of the Life-Guard, who had received, as we have above related, in the Emperor's absence, orders to lead his battalion to the Winter Palace, had only the day before lost his wife, whose body had not yet been even placed in the coffin; and nevertheless he, forgetting his domestic affliction, and devoting all his attention to respond to the call of duty, without an instant's hesitation performed the orders he had received. The rank and file on their side also afforded many examples of fidelity and military discipline. We have in a former page narrated the reception given by the soldiers of the Preobrajènskii Regiment, on the 13th of December, to the officer who had attempted to impose upon them by means of false statements. On the same day and among the companies of the Izmàiloffskii Regiment another young officer had appeared busily persuading the soldiers not to take the oath to Nicholas Pàvlovitch; but the non-commissioned officers had obliged him to retire,

saying that they were much more inclined to believe their old commanders, and that if he would not leave them they would take him to their superiors. On the 14th, at the relieving of the guard in the morning, and when the party of Horse-Guards was marching out of the Winter Palace, the commanding officer of the party, Prince Odòevskii, one of the conspirators, told the men that they were to go back to barracks alone, and that he had no time to accompany them. "No, Your Grace," * replied the oldest of the non-commissioned officers, and with him the whole party; "you heard that the "General ordered us to go to take the oath; lead "us where we are told to go; we will not let "you leave us." The result was that Odòevskii was compelled to go with the party and take the oath along with them. A party from the Pàvlovskii Regiment of the Life-Guard, under the command of Ivan Tiùrikoff, a non-commissioned officer, stood out in front of the Moscow barracks during the whole time of the mutiny with the most immovable courage and fidelity to its duty. To the Emperor's Company of the Preobrajènskii Regiment, while posted at the

* Prince being the highest title in the Russian Nobility, I have, for want of a better term, adopted the word "Grace," by analogy with the Ducal rank in England.—*Translator.*

Isaac Bridge, there had frequently been sent from the assemblage of the revolters non-commissioned officers and men with the intention of haranguing them. In consequence of orders having been given not to fire—orders which were strictly obeyed—Corporal Andreiànoff and several other non-commissioned officers drove away these men or prevailed upon them to retire. At last, when the Commanders of the companies of the Grenadier Regiment of Life-Guards, Pùstchin and Stackelberg, in endeavouring to reason with their men who had been seduced into the mutiny, continued to use their persuasions to men who were in the middle of the insurgent squares, and two other officers, throwing themselves upon them, cried to the soldiers, "Boys, they are "traitors; run them through!" the soldiers—the very men actively engaged in the mutiny—began, on the contrary, to defend them, saying, "What should we run them through for; they "came with their companies?"

But independently of these individual examples of courage, most consoling was the conviction — founded in the first instance on the very peculiarities of the rising itself, and afterwards fully confirmed by the subsequent legal enquiry and trial—that even in the ranks of the insurgents themselves the designs of a

handful of criminals were in no sense the designs of the mass, and that the wicked intentions of the former found no sympathy among the soldiers whom they had seduced. It was not by dreams of some new, and to them totally unintelligible, order of things; it was not by any desire for a reform which they could not comprehend; it was not by the word "*Constitution*," to which the exciters of the revolt, in order to make it intelligible to the simple mind of the soldier, even attached the ridiculous signification of "the wife of the Emperor *Constantine*;" it was not, we repeat, by all this that the common soldiers were seduced from their allegiance: they were led astray — we again affirm—by a phantom of legality, deriving its principal force from the assurances, repeated in many cases by their immediate superiors, that the new oath required of them was a deception. The soldiers were, consequently, mere victims of a villanous pretext, and it was from this point of view that they were afterwards regarded by the Government, which gave to the non-commissioned officers and soldiers, on their manifesting sincere repentance, a full and general pardon.

But let us return to the march of events.

The peril which had threatened the Imperial family, and the unforeseen collision with the revolted portion of the Grenadier Regiment of the Life-Guard, still more urgently demanded an augmentation of precautionary measures. The Emperor sent Adlerberg to the Grand Equerry Dolgorùkii with orders to get ready, but without attracting any attention, the equipages necessary for going out of town, in order that in case of necessity the two Empresses and the Imperial children might be transported, under an escort of the Chevalier-Guard, to Tsàrskoe Selò. Dolgorùkii was in the palace, and the Empresses, learning that Adlerberg had arrived from the Square, sent word to him to appear in their presence. He found Mària Feòdorovna in tears, almost frantic with despair, and making no secret of the most melancholy apprehensions. Alexandra Feòdorovna preserved a greater degree of tranquillity and firmness. Concealing from both of them the object with which he had been sent, Adlerberg endeavoured to communicate to them his own personal conviction, founded on an interior presentiment, that all would end satisfactorily.

We have already stated, that the artillery had received orders, brought first by Bulùgin and then by Potàpoff, to appear upon the square: the

order had reached General Sukhozanèt on his return from the barracks of the Horse-Artillery. Galloping off to the 1st Artillery brigade, he instantly and in person led from thence four guns of the 1st Light Company, under the command of Lieutenant Bakùnin,* and at the same time ordered the Brigade-Commandant, Colonel Nesteròvskii, to send after him other guns as soon as they could be harnessed; Brigade-Adjutant Philosòphoff † he ordered to ride off with the tumbrils to the laboratory for ammunition, and Lieutenant Bulùigin to set off to the same place with the numbers of the cartridge-bags, in order that, as soon as he received the ammunition, he might bring it to the palace. But at the laboratory a difficulty was very nearly met with. The commander of it, Colonel Tchelìayeff, having heard of the mutiny that was going on, remained in considerable uncertainty to which side belonged the party which had been sent for the ammunition, and therefore could not be induced to give up the keys of the magazines, so that Philosòphoff was preparing to break open the doors, when sud-

* Afterwards Aide-de-Camp to the Grand Duke Michael Pàvlovitch, and subsequently Major-General. He died in 1841, at the Caucasus, from a wound received in action with the mountaineers.

† Now General-Aide-de-Camp, and Member of the Committee of the 18th August, 1814.

denly there fortunately arrived Ensign Golìànoff, who was attached to the laboratory, who had that morning seen the oath administered to the artillery, and who consequently was able to prevail upon Tchelìayeff to consent. Just after this arrived Bulùigin also, who, after supplying the soldiers he had brought with him from the barracks with ammunition, put them into izvòztchiks' sledges, and galloped off with the limbers to the square. Even before they had time to come up, Sukhozanèt, not far from the end of the Voznessènskaia Street, encountered the Emperor on his return from the palace to the troops. By His Majesty's order, he posted the four guns which had been already brought up in a line across the Admiralty Square, and, having caused them to be unlimbered, he gave the word of command as loud as he could, in order to terrify the insurgents, to load the pieces *with ball*. The Emperor rode up to the front and saluted the soldiers. "The guns are "loaded," reported Sukhozanèt, in a voice so low that nobody else could hear it; "but with- "out ball; the ball-cartridges will soon be "here."

In the mean time the audacity of the mutineers, reinforced by the Grenadiers of the Life-Guard, had risen to a still higher pitch. They

increased the violence of their irregular fire, and the bullets were whistling round the Emperor himself. He was looking fixedly at Benkendorff, who stood at a little distance off. Remarking that the latter was reprimanding several of the soldiers for ducking their heads when they heard the shots, he enquired what was the matter, and, on hearing the answer, he set spurs to his horse, which carried him forward right into the thickest of the fire. At a yet earlier moment, the mob, slightly inclined to disturbance, and led away by the example of disorder, had been pelting the troops from behind hoardings and round corners with logs of firewood and stones; now several individuals of the lower class, bribed with money and brandy, began openly to run over to the rebels. At one of the volleys fired by the latter, the Emperor's horse shied and bolted aside; and his eye was then struck by the fact that the crowd in his immediate neighbourhood, which at first he had not been able to persuade to cover their heads, was beginning to put on their caps and look at him with a somewhat insolent air. "Caps "off!" cried he, with involuntary severity. In one moment every head was bare, and the crowd streamed away from him. The place was instantly cleared, and at the entrances of

the streets pickets of cavalry were posted, with orders to allow no one to enter the square.

At last the Izmàilovskii Regiment arrived. It was reported as having come up in good order, and to have halted at the Blue Bridge. When the Emperor rode up to it, the soldiers saluted him with joyful countenances. "They "have been trying to blacken you in my eyes," said he; "but I would not believe it: neverthe- "less, if there are any among you who wish to go "against me, I shall not prevent it, and I permit "them this moment to join the rebels." The answer was a unanimous, deafening hurrah that rent the air! "If that is the case, now load "your muskets." The Emperor himself led the regiment forward in the line forming a prolongation of the Voznessènskaia Street, and, leaving it in reserve at the front angle of Lobànoff's house, he proceeded round the Isaac Cathedral to his brother's detachment, between the church and the Horse-Guards' Riding-School, opposite the ranks of the insurgent Brigade of Seamen. Here the Grand Duke Michael Pàvlovitch again began to propose going as a mediator to try the effect of persuasion upon the rebels. The Emperor, still hoping to avoid the necessity of bloodshed, which, however, seemed at present inevitable, no longer opposed the gene-

rous devotion of his brother, and only ordered General Aide-de-Camp Levashòff to accompany him. The Grand Duke rode straight up to the seamen, and addrêssed them with the usual salutation. From the rebel ranks resounded the friendly acclamation of, "We wish you good "health, Your Imperial Highness!" "What has "happened to you, and what are you thinking "of?" continued he. And the sailors began to explain that, a fortnight before, when nobody had even heard of the illness of His Majesty the Emperor Alexander Pàvlovitch, they had been suddenly told that he was dead; that then they had been ordered to take the oath to His Majesty Constantine Pàvlovitch, which they had done without a murmur; and that now, at last, they wanted to make them swear again to *another* Emperor, assuring them that the first would not have their oath and refused to reign. "How can we, Your Highness," said they, "incur such a sin on our souls, when the person "to whom we took the oath is still alive, and yet "we do not see him? If they begin to tamper "with the oath, what will remain sacred?" In vain did the Grand Duke endeavour to convince them that Constantine Pàvlovitch had really of his own free will renounced the throne; that he, the Grand Duke, was a personal wit-

ness of his having done so, and that precisely on that ground he had himself taken the oath to the new Emperor. "We are always ready to "believe Your Highness," answered the blinded victims of the false suggestions of their immediate superiors; "but let Constantine Pàvlo-"vitch himself come and affirm his renuncia-"tion to us; as it is we don't know even where "he is." All further reasoning remained ineffectual. The Grand Duke was obliged to return without success, and not without having run imminent risk of paying with his life for his gallant attempt. At the same moment when he was trying to persuade the seamen to return to their duty, a young man, a retired civil functionary, one of the most recently enlisted, but, at the same time, one of the most fanatical partisans of the conspiracy, was prowling among them, urging them to insubordination. He thought that he could take advantage of what, in his opinion, was a favourable opportunity, and, at a distance of a few paces, he levelled a pistol at the brother of his Tsar. . . . . The Grand Duke was saved only by the momentary movement of three sailors, who were also standing in the ranks of the insurgents. Observing the villanous attempt, they all three threw themselves on the criminal; with cries of,

"What has he done to you?" knocked the pistol out of his hand; and began to beat him with the butts of their muskets. A touching proof that, even amidst all its errors, and in the wildest outbreak of its passions, our people look with disgust and horror upon every criminal design against the Imperial family, which has for so many ages shown itself the object of their love and veneration. *

In describing the different phases of the revolt and the various changes which it underwent with the march of circumstances, we must also mention, though somewhat later than the event itself, the 1st battalion of the Finland Regiment of the Life-Guard, which General Aide-de-Camp Count Komaròvskii had received orders to bring up. In the barracks, in consequence of the Regimental Commandant Voropànoff having left for the palace, the Count found only the Commandant of Brigade, General Golovìn, who

* The three seamen who saved the Grand Duke's life, and who were afterwards liberally rewarded and pensioned for life, were named Dorofèeff, Feòdoroff, and Kùroptieff. From the published sentence of the Supreme Criminal Tribunal it was known that the measure of punishment inflicted upon the assassin, who was not seized till some time afterwards at Warsaw, was diminished, in spite of the precise rigour of the law, at the particular intercession of the Grand Duke.

had just returned from the administration of the oath to the Chasseur regiment of the Life-Guard. Bringing out the battalion in full marching order and with ball-cartridge, they both together set off with it, in conformity to orders, in the direction of the Isaac Square. On the road Golovìn learned, though unfortunately too late, that His Majesty's Carabineer Company, which had just been relieved from guard-duty, had not been mustered for the administration of the oath, in spite of the orders he had given. On passing the wooden foot-bridge laid across the Nevà on the ice, he thought it necessary, in order to guard the avenue leading from it to the quay, to leave the 3rd or Chasseur company there, and the remaining three he led forward in close column of squads, with loaded muskets. A little farther on they were met by Prince Eugène of Würtemberg, with orders from the Emperor to hasten to the appointed place. The men arrived upon the Isaac Bridge almost at a run, and Golovìn and Komaròvskii, at their head, had got halfway across it, when suddenly a violent fire was opened upon the Senate Square, and at the same moment, in the middle of the column on the bridge, several voices cried out, "Halt!" At this command the whole column stopped and fell into a certain

degree of confusion. In front of them all was the company that had not taken the oath. Its carabineer platoon, however, did not hesitate long, and under the command of Captain Viàtkin,* passing over the remaining portion of the bridge, halted with its front to the monument and its rear to the river. But the platoon of sharpshooters, which was drawn up not in battalion order, but behind the carabineers, did not advance. To all the arguments and menaces of the Brigade and Battalion commanders, as well as of Count Komaròvskii, the men only replied that they had not sworn to Nicholas Pàvlovitch, and that they would do nothing wrong, but that they would not fire upon their own friends. The cause of all this, as it was afterwards discovered, was one of the concealed conspirators, a young lieutenant, who, without giving any grounds for suspicion that he had any share in the conspiracy, had succeeded by secret suggestions in corrupting the platoon, which consisted almost entirely of young soldiers who had recently been drafted from the Carabineer Regiment of Instruction. The two companies following the platoon of sharpshooters, and stopped by it, viz. the 1st

* Now General-Aide-de-Camp and Commandant of Wilna.

and 2nd Chasseurs, also obstinately refused to advance; but the 3rd, which had been left by Golovìn on the quay of the Vassìlievskii Ostroff, by his orders traversed the river upon the ice without leaving a man behind, and joined the platoon of carabineers. In general this insubordination had no ulterior consequences, nay, the orders of the Emperor were punctually obeyed, for, while the passage over the Isaac Bridge was guarded by the Horse-Pioneers, a company of the Preobrajènskii Regiment of the Life-Guard, and part of the 1st Finland battalion, another part of the latter, in perfect order and tranquillity, was drawn up in the middle of the bridge, as if in reserve.

The Emperor, to whom all the circumstances just narrated were afterwards reported, having in the mean time posted the Chasseur Regiment of the Life-Guard as soon as it came up, in reserve, on the Admiralty Square, opposite the Goròkhovaia, behind the line of artillery, proceeded again to his former place, on this side of the Isaac Cathedral. In the manner we have been describing all the force present in the capital had been concentrated into one spot; but before putting them in action, the heart of the young Monarch still desired by new measures of mildness and persuasion to bring to reason

the deceived insurgents. It was determined to try on them the influence of religion.

Two Mitropolìtans, Seraphìm of St. Petersburg and Evgènii of Kieff, had been expected all the morning in the Winter Palace, for the celebration of the Te Deum which had been appointed for that day. The Emperor sent Strèkaloff for the former of these prelates, but he was voluntarily accompanied by the second also. Both, arrayed in their canonical vestments, in readiness for the Te Deum, with their two Subdeacons,* drove out into the square in a hackney carriage, close behind which followed Strèkaloff in full uniform and with his cordon over his shoulder. Seraphìm and his subdeacon alighted at the nearest angle of the Admiralty boulevard; they were instantly surrounded by the people, who, prostrating themselves on the ground, implored them not to go to certain death, which had already struck down Count Miloràdovitch. But General Aide-de-Camp Vassìltchikoff, riding up at the same moment, repeated the desire of the Emperor, which had

* The subdeacon (hypodiakon) who was with Seraphìm was Prokhòr Ivànoff; Evgènii was attended by Pàvel Ivànoff. Prokhòr Ivànoff, who died in 1853, was the first deacon of the Greek Church who received the honour, on the 25th anniversary of the 14th of December (in 1850), in remembrance of the events of this day, of being attached to the Order of St. Anne of the 3rd class.

already been communicated through Strèkaloff, that the Mitropolìtan should endeavour to move the erring mutineers by the force of an appeal to their religious sentiments. At this moment Colonel Stürler fell, before his eyes, by the hand of Kakhòvskii. Notwithstanding this, the pastor, zealous in performance of his duty, kissing the crucifix and placing this ensign of our faith upon his head, advanced to the insurgent crowd, followed by the Mitropolìtan Evgènii with the subdeacons. At the sight of the holy prelate, marching under the protection of his sacred functions, with his hoary hair floating behind his shoulders, the soldiers lowered their muskets and began to cross themselves; some of them even kissed the crucifix as it was extended to them. But when the Mitropolìtan began, after calling God to witness the truth of his words, to endeavour to bring them to reason by describing the events that had taken place, in their true light, and setting forth the criminality of treason against their lawful Tsar and the Divine wrath which was awaiting the guilty, the leaders of the revolt, without respect to his holy functions, cried out that their lawful Tsar was Constantine; that he was at that moment in chains near the capital; that this was not a churchman's affair; and that, if the Archbishop could take two

different oaths in the same week, such perjury was no example to them; that they wanted no parsons, but Michael Pàvlovitch. At length they ordered the drums to beat, in order to drown the sound of his voice, and threatened to fire at him; swords and bayonets were even crossed over the head of the Mitropolìtan.* His courageous readiness to sacrifice himself remained fruitless, and he was obliged to retire hastily, with his companions, to the hoarding of the Isaac Cathedral, whence they all returned to the palace in common hackney sledges.

It was now nearly three o'clock and rapidly growing dark; the weather, which had been rather damp, was beginning to be cold. The insurgents on the Senate Square were in evident uncertainty what steps they were to take next, but they still obstinately stood fast in the position they had occupied, shouting and yelling louder than before; and though the greater part of the soldiers in their ranks

* This venerable and experienced prelate departed this life in 1843, in the 80th year of his age, the 44th of his episcopal career, and the 22nd of his administration of this see. The Mitropolìt Evgènii died in 1837.

fired high, yet nevertheless the bullets wounded many of the Horse Guards, who were posted nearer to their fire than the other troops. The hope of acting upon them by persuasion and kindness had now vanished, and it was impossible not to apprehend that, with the approach of nightfall, the share taken in the mutiny by the mob would be still more active, a circumstance which might singularly endanger the position of the troops, who were hemmed in on every side by the crowd. The troops themselves were burning with ardour to put an end to the audacious insurrection, and were beginning to murmur at their inaction. But the Emperor, from his natural feelings of clemency, still imagined that it would be possible to envelop and surround the mass of the mutineers so closely as to compel them to surrender without bloodshed. Desirous of ascertaining this by a fresh examination of their position, he again rode out into the Senate Square; but was again greeted with a volley of musketry. "Grape is "what they want!" suddenly cried some one from behind. The Emperor turned round. Close behind him was General-Aide-de-Camp Toll.

On the departure of the Grand Duke Michael Pàvlovitch from Nennal, all the post-horses had been taken up by his suite, and consequently

Toll, being reduced to travel with ordinary hired horses, had soon fallen behind, and did not arrive in Petersburg till two o'clock in the afternoon. He proceeded straight to the palace; but hearing there what was going on, he hastily mounted the General-Aide-de-Camp's horse, and galloped to the scene of action. "Voyez ce qui se passe ici," said the Emperor, when he saw him; "voilà un joli commencement "de règne, un trône teint de sang!" "Sire," replied Toll, "le seul moyen d'y mettre fin, c'est "de faire mitrailler cette canaille."

Toll was not the only person who was of that opinion. It was shared by another as well, the Emperor's former commanding-officer in the Guards, a man deeply respected by him for the elevation of his character and turn of thinking, General-Aide-de-Camp Vassiltchikoff.* "Sire," said he too, "il n'y a plus un moment à perdre: "l'on n'y peut rien maintenant: il faut de la "mitraille!"

Even the Emperor himself, unless he refused to yield to the demonstration of cool reason, could not but coincide in the same view: but

* Subsequently Count, Prince, and President of the Council of the Empire. Crowned with the laurels both of military and civil virtues, and bewailed by the Monarch and all Russia, he died in 1847.

his heart still struggled against the conviction of a bitter necessity. "Vous voulez donc que "le premier jour de mon règne je verse le "sang de mes sujets?" he answered. "Pour "sauver votre Empire!" exclaimed Vassìltchikoff. And in reality, there were but two alternatives: either to shed the blood of a few individuals, and by so doing, almost infallibly, to save all the rest and the Empire itself; or, by giving way to personal feelings, to sacrifice to them the general welfare.

The words of Vassìltchikoff induced the Emperor to stifle his own feelings. . . .

The Horse Guards were wheeled to the right and posted with their rear to the Nevà, and the Horse-Pioneers led off to the English Quay. When this movement was performed, three of the four guns which had first arrived in the Square, under the command of Lieutenant Bakùnin, advancing close up to the very angle of the boulevard, left shoulders forward, unlimbered and ranged up in front of the Preobrajènskii Regiment of the Life-Guard, right opposite the rebel column, and the fourth, with its chief gunner, was dispatched to the Grand Duke Michael Pàvlovitch's detachment, on the other side of the Isaac Church. The Emperor ordered the pieces to be loaded with grape. There still

remained a ray of hope that the insurgents, terrified by these preparatives, and seeing no chance of escape, would surrender voluntarily.

But they still continued obstinately to keep their ground, with the same shouting as before. The Emperor, who now placed himself, on horseback, on the left flank of the battery, sent General Sukhozanèt to offer the revolters mercy for the last time. Sukhozanèt spurred his horse into a gallop and rode up to the crowd, which, grounding their muskets, divided to make way for him. "My lads," he cried, "the guns are "before you, but the Emperor in his clemency is "sorry for you and hopes that you will yet return "to your senses. If you will this instant lay "down your arms and surrender, all of you, "except the chief ringleaders, will be pardoned." The soldiers, evidently impressed by these words, cast down their eyes; but several officers and persons in plain clothes of debauched appearance surrounded the messenger, and in abusive language asked if he had brought them a constitution, using at the same time personal threats. "I am sent with mercy and not to parley," replied he, sharply wheeling his horse round and galloping out of the middle of the insurgents, who staggered back on both sides. A volley of musketry rattled after him. Some of the shots

scattered the plumes from his hat, and several persons were wounded behind the battery and on the boulevard.

"Your Majesty," reported Sukhozanèt on his return, "the madmen are crying 'Consti-"tution!'" . . . .

The Emperor shrugged his shoulders and raised his eyes to heaven. *All* means of conciliation having now been tried and exhausted, the decisive moment was come. He gave the word of command: "The guns to fire in order, "beginning from the right flank: make ready!"

The word of command, repeated by all the commanding-officers in order of seniority, had been given down to the very last—Bakùnin. But the Emperor's heart was pierced by a cruel pang. The word "Hold on all!" stopped the discharge. The same order was repeated after a few seconds. At last the Emperor gave the word of command for the third time. When Bakùnin pronounced the fatal word, it remained unexecuted. The gunner, who had already twice heard the order countermanded, seemed to hesitate. Bakùnin either observed or perhaps had expected this; he instantly jumped off his horse, darted to the gun, and asked the gunner why he did not fire? "They are our own "people, Your Honour!" replied the man,

timidly and in a low voice. "If I myself were "standing before the muzzle," cried Bakùnin, "and they gave you the word 'Fire,' even then "you ought not to hesitate." The gunner obeyed. . . .

The first shot struck high up on the building of the Senate. It was answered with wild cries and a running volley.

But the first shot was followed by a second and a third, which took effect in the very centre of the mass and instantly threw it into confusion. A part of the mutineers rushed to the other side of the Square, which was occupied by the Semeònovskii Regiment, and pressed upon it with all its force. The Grand Duke hesitated, as the Emperor had done before. "Give the word to "fire, Your Highness," said the head gunner; "if you don't, they will smash us too." The word of command resounded here too.

Treason is ever cowardly. The conspirators, forgetting all their blustering threats, and thinking only of saving their lives, turned and fled: the soldiers, closely enveloped on every side, abandoned by the ringleaders who had urged them to revolt, and perhaps feeling their eyes opened by the flight of the latter, could not stand their ground alone; they also rapidly scattered in various directions, along the Galèr-

naia Street, where the companies of the Pàvlovskii regiment stood;* along the English Quay; some threw themselves over the parapets upon the frozen Nevà, where they fell into the deep snow; others endeavoured to reach the banks of the Kriùkoff Canal, or concealed themselves in the court-yards of houses, in cellars, in underground shops. . . . On the Senate Square, which a moment before had been swarming with a wild and agitated crowd, there remained not a single person, except those who were unable to rise from the ground; of these however the number was small: the grape-shot, discharged at so small a distance, either scattered upwards, or, rebounding also in an upward direction from the ground, did not prove fatal. In proof of this, a considerable number of marks made by it remained on the walls of the Senate and of the adjoining houses.

After three discharges, the artillery, by order of the Emperor, was again limbered up and moved forward to the monument of Peter the Great, where, once more, unlimbering, it fired three more shots at the assemblage, which was

* These companies, being posted almost opposite the cannon directed against the insurgents, by which several grenadiers were wounded, were not the least thrown into confusion by them, and even opened upon the insurgents, when the latter were beaten, a rolling fire.

again drawing up, in some degree of order, on the ice of the Nevà. Besides this, a second discharge was poured in from the Grand Duke Michael Pàvlovitch's position upon the crowd that was running along by the Kriùkoff Canal.

All was over. . . .

The spots upon which the rebels had been standing were instantly occupied by the Preobrajènskii and Izmàilovskii regiments, after detaching several parties from the latter and from the Semeònovskii, for the purpose of pursuing and arresting the fugitives who had concealed themselves in the houses in the Galèrnaia-Street. Among those who were seized, almost at the very first moment, was one of the officers of the Moscow Regiment of the Life-Guard, and Toll galloped off to the palace to report this to the Emperor, thinking that His Majesty had already returned thither. Here, in the grand drawing-room of the apartments of the Empress Mària Feòdorovna, from an early hour in the morning, the whole court had been assembled, together with the persons who had arrived for the Te Deum; they had all been awaiting the catastrophe in mortal anxiety, which had been still

further aggravated by fragmentary and contradictory reports brought in from the Square, and by the sudden irruption, not long before, of the crowd of Life-Grenadiers into the courtyard of the palace, which had been clearly visible from this saloon, as its windows looked in that direction,* and, lastly, by the report of cannon, of whose cause and consequences they were in equal ignorance. The eyes of everybody turned, in agitated curiosity, to Toll, who hurried, on his entrance, into the interior apartments in search of the Emperor. The latter, however, was not in the palace, and Toll found only the Empresses, who also had been *waiting* the whole morning in a state of mind which defies description. . . . . The whole time of the mutiny they had passed in the little corner cabinet of the Empress-Mother,† looking towards the Admiralty Square; the wife of the new Emperor sate upon the window-seat, from whence, as long as it was light, a portion of the theatre of action could be seen in the distance. Before their eyes the revolted Life-Grenadiers had run along the square, in the greatest disorder, and the regi-

* This saloon now no longer exists in a separate form, but forms part of the apartments of the 2nd spare suite.

† This cabinet also no longer exists: its area is included in the corner room under the interior guard of light cavalry.

ment of the Chevalier-Guard had passed at full trot, on its way to effect a junction with the other troops. The Emperor had repeatedly sent to them Prince Eugène of Würtemberg, General Aide-de-Camp Prince Trubetskòi, and Lieutenant-General Demìdoff, with tidings of the state of affairs. When Demìdoff arrived, the Empress Mària Feòdorovna, in the agitation which was every moment gaining more and more complete possession of her, was suddenly struck by a touching thought. She snatched from the table a small portrait of the late Emperor, the work of the celebrated Isabey, and, putting it into Demìdoff's hand, said, " Prenez ce portrait et allez le montrer " aux insurgés : peut-être que son aspect les " fera revenir à eux et rentrer dans l'ordre ! " . . . . . When the report of the first cannon-shot resounded through the air, the Empress Alexandra Feòdorovna was alone in the room with Karamzìn, who had just returned from the square. She had fallen upon her knees, and in that attitude, in fervent prayer, remained till the arrival of Adlerberg with intelligence from the Emperor that all was over. But the Emperor himself had not made his appearance, and consequently the anxiety of the mother and the wife was not yet at an end.

" Ah, voilà notre cher Toll," exclaimed the Empress Mària Feòdorovna, as he entered; " que " nous apportez-vous encore de nouveau? Mon " Dieu, il y a donc eu du sang versé!! . . . ." " Calmez-vous, Madame," replied Toll; " la " mesure était indispensable, et elle a été déci- " sive. Les rebelles s'enfuient de toutes parts " et on les saisit. Votre Majesté peut être com- " plètement tranquille sur le compte de l'Empe- " reur, et il doit revenir incessamment." " Ah, " allez, Général, allez le rejoindre." In the very act of leaving the palace Toll found the Emperor, attended by several generals, dismounting at the door under the archway of the principal gate. He had passed the whole time up to this moment on the square, personally giving the necessary orders as circumstances required. The duty of pursuing and arresting the fugitives was confided to General Aide-de-Camp Benkendorff, with four squadrons of the Horse-Guards and a squadron of Horse-Pioneers, under the command of General Aide-de-Camp Orlòff, on the Vassìlievskii Ostroff, and with two squadrons of the Horse-Guards on this side of the Nevà.* In the mean time it had become

* In all about 500 men were arrested. The greater part of the non-commissioned officers and men of the Seamen's Brigade and Life-Grenadiers returned of their own accord to barracks, where, with

completely dark. In order to deprive ill-disposed persons of any opportunity of renewing their attempts under cover of the darkness, it was found necessary to leave the troops under arms the whole night. The Emperor posted them* himself, and it was not until after making all these arrangements that he returned to the palace. His meeting with the Imperial family

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sincere repentance and in profound terror at their own fatal insubordination, they entreated mercy and indulgence. They were all, as has been stated in a preceding page, pardoned, and the same clemency was shown also to the mutineers of the Moscow Regiment of the Life-Guard, in consideration of the zeal and fidelity shown by the remaining and major portion of that corps.

* The disposition of the troops was as follows: on the Palace-Square the Preobrajènskii Regiment and two companies of the 1st battalion of the Life-Guard Chasseurs, with 10 guns of the 1st and 2nd Battery Companies, and three Squadrons of the Chevalier-Guard regiment; in the Great Milliònnaia, near the bridge over the Winter Canal, a company of the Life-Guard Chasseurs, with two guns; near the bridge of the theatre in the Hermitage another company of the same regiment, with four guns; at the corner of the Winter Palace looking towards the Admiralty, opposite the latter and on the Palace Quay, the 1st battalion of the Izmàilovskii regiment and a squadron of the Chevalier-Guard, with four guns; on the Admiralty Square the 2nd battalion of the Chasseur regiment of Life-Guards; on the Senate Square, under the command of General-Aide-de-Camp Vassìltchikoff, the Semeònovskii and Moscow and 2nd battalion of the Izmàilovskii, with four guns, and four squadrons of the Horse-Guards; on Vassìlievskii Ostroff, under the orders of General-Aide-de-Camp Benkendorff, a battalion of the Finland Regiment of the Life-Guard, with four pieces of horse-artillery, two squadrons of Horse-Guards, and a squadron of Horse-Pioneers. Besides the above, there remained in the courtyard of the palace the Sapper battalion of the Guard, to which was added the battalion of Instruction and a company of the Grenadier regiment of the Life-Guard, and in the other parts of the town were arranged patrols of the regiment of the Kazàks of the Life-Guard.

took place on the wooden staircase which, up to the time when the Winter Palace was destroyed by fire (in 1837), led from under the principal gateway to the front waiting-room for officers, next to the Empress Mària Feòdorovna's sleeping-apartment. The details of this re-assembling are scarcely within the reach of our feeble pen. The Empress-Consort seemed as if she was looking upon and embracing a man risen from the dead. . . . . .

Together with the Empresses was also His Highness the Heir Apparent,* who on that day, from an early hour in the morning, had been ordered to put on, for the first time in his life, the grand cordon of St. Andrew. The Emperor expressed a desire to carry him out to the battalion of Sappers that was drawn up in the courtyard. The Empress Mària Feòdorovna at first feared to expose the child to the danger of catching cold, but afterwards gave way, and her valet-de-chambre Grimm carefully carried him down the inner staircase. In the courtyard the Emperor showed his first-born to the Sappers, begging them to love his son as much as he, the

* The brother of the Empress Mària Feòdorovna, Duke Alexander of Würtemberg, had also remained during the whole morning in her apartments, retaining by his side his two sons, the Princes Alexander and Eugène, though the latter were at that time both grown-up young men and officers.

Emperor, loved them; he then put the Grand Duke into the arms of the men who were decorated with the Cross of St. George, and ordered the first man of each company to come up and kiss him. The veteran warriors, with rapture and cries of joy, clung to the hands and feet of the Imperial boy.

At last the moment arrived for that Te Deum which had been appointed, first for eleven o'clock, then for two, and was now really to commence at half-past six in the evening, under circumstances and with feelings quite different from what had been expected in the morning. The Emperor, with the Empress-Consort and all the members of the Imperial House,* went, preceded by the court and with the usual ceremonial customary on such occasions, to the great church of the palace. With the words, "Blessed be "thou that comest in the name of the Lord!" the new Emperor was met on his entrance into the temple, by that same prelate who a few hours before had exposed his life as a sacrifice

* With the exception of the Empress-Mother, who, completely exhausted by the agitations of such a day, took no part in the procession, and heard the prayers from the vestry.

to his holy functions. During the service there was no proclamation to kneel; all remained standing, only the Imperial couple, from the first words of the Divine service to the last, lay prostrate on the pavement. The Almighty was taking the heart of the Tsar into His hand!

No one, assuredly, of all those who were present at this sacred rite will ever forget the touching solemnity which marked it. All were deeply moved; all hearts were bursting with thankfulness, all eyes with tears; and when, at that solemn moment for the destinies of Russia, the first benediction was heard upon "the most "pious Emperor of All the Russias Nicholas "Pàvlovitch," unanimous and straight from the heart rose to Heaven the fervent prayer of every soul standing in that church; "and may the Lord "vouchsafe to him happiness and a peaceful "life, health and safety, and victory and mastery "over all his enemies!" . . . .

In truth, we may repeat, in the words of the writer to whom we have once before referred, history will confess that the expression, "*by the* "*Grace of God*" had its full significance in the Imperial title of Nicholas I. It was direct from the hands of God that he received his crown, and, when once he had received it, he valiantly defended the gift of God in that fatal moment

when hostile violence made an attempt to snatch it from him. Given by God, by God it was preserved!

"Dear, kind Constantine!"—wrote the Emperor to the Cesarèvitch in the first ardour of his feelings,—"your desire is accomplished: I "am Emperor; but at what cost, good Heavens! "at the cost of the blood of my subjects." . . . .

Even before the Te Deum, amidst the thousand overpowering cares of that day, the Emperor had more than once turned his thoughts to the valiant warrior who had laid down his life in his service. First, General Aide-de-Camp Prince Trubetskòi, and afterwards General Toll, had been sent, in order to express his sympathy with the condition of Count Miloràdovitch, and at the same time to obtain the most accurate intelligence. On leaving the church, the Emperor, who had not tasted food from the early morning,* immediately wrote with his own hand a letter to the Count, filled with sentiments of gratitude, of sympathy, and of hope. Miloràdovitch was still lying at the Horse-Guards' barracks; the ball had been extracted, but at the

* From the Kammer-Fourrier's journal we learn that Their Majesties dined on this day at 8 o'clock.

same time the physicians had pronounced the patient's death-warrant. Kavèlin, when sent with the letter, had orders to say that the Count was to take these autograph lines in the light of a personal visit from the Emperor, whom nothing would have prevented from coming himself but the extraordinary gravity of the circumstances. With deep feeling, and even with a feeble attempt to raise himself in his bed, the dying man replied to the Emperor's Aide-de-Camp, "Tell His Majesty that I am "dying; but happy that I am dying for him!" When the letter itself was read to him, he eagerly snatched it from the hands of the reader, pressed it to his heart, and would not let go his hold of it till the moment of his death.* The pistol-bullet which had inflicted the fatal wound on Miloràdovitch was brought by Kavèlin to the Emperor.

At night, when things had been at last brought into a certain degree of order, the Emperor requested his brother to drive to the Arsenal, in order to ascertain by personal inspection whether everything was quiet there as well. The Grand Duke drove, in his sledge,

* He expired about three o'clock the next morning.

along the Milliònnaia and over the Champ de Mars. At the beginning of his drive, as far as the bridge over the Winter Canal, everything had the appearance of a city just conquered; round piled-up watch-fires stood numerous bivouacs of troops; on the bridge itself were cannon; but as soon as the bridge was passed, the scene instantly changed: the streets were as solitary and quiet as they usually are at night; now and then glided by a belated izvòztchik or a solitary foot-passenger, and nothing struck the eye that could call to mind or that showed the least traces of the storm that had passed over Russia. Round the Arsenal, where the guard was mounted by the Artillery brigade of Instruction, and on the way back along the Palace Quay, all was equally still and tranquil; only from the bridge by the theatre of the Hermitage, up to the palace, the town again resumed the animated appearance of a camp.*

* All this continued only till the morning of the 15th of December. On the complete re-establishment, by that time, of tranquillity, the Emperor, after riding round all the troops and thanking them for their zeal, fidelity, and admirable order, ordered them to be dismissed. At the same time the troops which were at the moment in cantonments out of town, to whom on the day before commands had been issued to march to the city, were sent back to their quarters, with the exception of the Life-Guard regiment of Dragoons (now the Horse-Grenadiers), which was brought up for the purpose of carrying dispatches, and two squadrons of the Hussar and Uhlan regiments of the Life-Guards were left in the environs of the town for the capture of the fugitive conspirators.

When the Grand Duke re-entered the Emperor's cabinet, he had before his eyes a completely unexpected spectacle. One of the conspirators, who had suddenly drawn upon themselves the most unhappy notoriety, was kneeling before the new Emperor, imploring that his life might be spared. . . . He and many others of his fellow-plotters had already been seized, or had presented themselves of their own accord with their submission; and the Emperor, indifferent to fatigue, in the dead of night, in his scarf and broad ribbon, as he had been dressed the whole day, was putting the first interrogatories to them, receiving the reports that were flowing in from all quarters, and giving the necessary orders.* The Grand Duke, on the other hand, knowing nothing of the existence of the plot, had up to this moment attributed all that had taken place to the ignorance and misunderstanding of the troops on the subject of the new oath, and only guessed at the truth when he beheld this scene.

* The Emperor did not lie down for an instant during the whole of that night, but passed it in similar occupation. The Empress Alexandra Feòdorovna returned to her apartments after the Te Deum, without the power of speaking, and hardly able to stand. All the Imperial children passed the night in two rooms, in a sort of bivouac.

The next morning a concise narrative of the events of the fatal day appeared in the St. Petersburg gazettes. It concluded as follows:—"The events of yesterday are doubtless "such as must be melancholy to every Russian, "and must have left a painful impression on "the heart of His Majesty the Emperor. But "every one who was a witness of the conduct of "our Monarch on this memorable day, his mag- "nanimous courage, his striking and immovable "coolness, which fill with enthusiastic astonish- "ment all the troops and their most experienced "leaders; every one who witnessed what bril- "liant valour and success distinguished the pro- "ceedings of His Majesty's august Brother, the "Grand Duke Michael Pàvlovitch; lastly, every "one who will reflect that the rebels, after pass- "ing four hours in a Square during the greater "part of this time completely open on every "side, found no sympathisers but a few drunken "soldiers, and an insignificant number of indi- "viduals of the very lowest class, also intoxi- "cated; and that, out of all the regiments of the "Guard, not one in its entirety, but only a few "companies of two regiments and of the Naval "Brigade, allowed themselves to be seduced "by the criminal example of mutiny: he, un- "questionably, while expressing his gratitude to

" Almighty Providence, will confess that in this " affair there is much of what is even consola- " tory, that it is nothing else but a momentary " trial which will at least serve as an indication " of the real character of the nation, of the im- " movable fidelity of the incomparably larger " majority of the troops, and of the general and " devoted attachment of Russians to their most " August and lawful Monarch."

Let us add, on our part, that the danger had been evident. The Guard had been fighting against the Guard; the Emperor, the only prop of the Empire, during several successive hours had exposed his life to the most imminent risk; the people had been in a state of agitation, and it had been difficult to distinguish the true disposition of the public mind. It was known that a conspiracy existed, but the profoundest obscurity enveloped both its leaders and its extent; all was still surrounded with impenetrable mystery, and all might recommence afresh. These reflections offered very little that was encouraging, but we have seen the firmness and presence of mind of the young Monarch; the officers admired it, but the soldiers were filled with rapture by it. The victory remained on the side of the Throne and of loyalty, and this was enough to bind the soldiers for ever to their

new Tsar. Every man, both in their ranks and among the people, understood that, if the danger were to arise a second time, a new leader—the new Monarch — was worthy and capable of directing all and of repelling anything.

And, in fact, in a very short time, the whole network of the conspiracy was discovered; all its ringleaders were seized, and handed over to a punishment mitigated by the clemency of the Monarch, and the seeds of the disease were extirpated. Then, on occasion of the solemn thanksgiving and service of memorial on the Senate Square, the Emperor Nicholas, in his manifest of the 13th of July, 1826, on promulgating at the same time the magnificent programme of his reign, announcd to his own Russia :—

" In throwing a last glance upon these de-
" plorable events, We consider it our bounden
" duty, on that very spot where for the first
" time, just seven months ago, amidst a mo-
" mentary revolt, there appeared before Us the
" secret of an inveterate evil, to perform the
" last duty of offering up a solemn memorial
" service, as an expiation for Russian blood
" poured forth upon that very spot for its

" faith, its Tsar, and its country, and at the " same time to offer up to Almighty God a " solemn prayer of thanksgiving. We plainly " beheld His beneficent hand when it tore aside " the veil, pointed out the evil, and helped Us " to eradicate it with its own weapons; the " thundercloud of revolt rose upon the horizon " only to cause the design of rebellion to be " extinguished for ever.

" This design was in harmony neither with " the character nor with the feelings of the " Russian nation. Entertained by a handful of " vile criminals, it infected their immediate " associates, hearts plunged in immorality and " imaginations inflamed by wild and insolent " dreams; but in the course of ten years of cri- " minal efforts it never penetrated, it never " could penetrate, any farther. The heart of " Russia has ever been, and will ever be, inac- " cessible to its poison. . . . . .

" Let all classes unite in confidence in the " Government. In a state in which love of the " Monarch and loyalty to the throne are based " upon the innate qualities of the people; where " there are national laws and firmness in their " administration, all the efforts of ill-intentioned " men will ever be vain and frantic: they may " hide for a while under the veil of secresy, but at

" their first appearanee in the light, spurned by " universal indignation, they will be instantly " crushed into annihilation by the force of law. " In this condition of the body politic, every man " may be confident of the unshaken solidity of " the order which will protect his person and his " property, and, tranquil in the present, may " look forward with hope to the future. It is " not by means of insolent and impracticable " projects, which are ever destructive, but it " is from above, that national institutions are " gradually improved, defects remedied, and " abuses reformed. In this regular progress of " gradual amelioration, every moderate desire for " reform, every project for the augmentation of " the power of the laws, for the dissemination of " true enlightenment and industry, brought to " Our knowledge through a legal channel, which " is open to every man, will ever be received " by Us with goodwill and attention; for We " neither have, nor can possibly have, any other " desire than that of seeing our country at the " highest pitch of happiness and glory which " Providence may have destined it to attain.

" Lastly, amid these general hopes and wishes, " We shall direct our particular attention to " the position of those families who have lost " members implicated in the commission of poli-

'tical offences. During the whole course of "this affair, while sincerely sympathising with "their painful feelings, We regard it as Our "duty to assure them, that, in Our eyes, the bond "of relationship, though it hands down to pos- "terity the glory of good actions performed by "their ancestors, cannot cast a stain through "personal errors and crimes. Let no one there- "fore dare to make use of these circumstances "of relationship for the purpose of employing "them as a reproach: this is forbidden by the "civil law, and still more strongly reprobated "by the law of Christianity."

We began our narrative with a letter written by the young Grand Duke Alexander Pàvlovitch to Count Kotchubeì. We will quote here another and most touching letter, written, soon after the occurrences of the 14th December, by the aged mother of the now departed Emperor Alexander I. to the same person. Kotchubeì was at that time abroad, and the following was the manner in which he was addressed, on the 16th February, 1826, by the Empress Mària Feòdorovna:

"J'ai tardé, Monsieur le Comte, à vous répon-

" dre à deux lettres du 11 Décembre et du 3
" Janvier, parceque j'ai voulu vous écrire de ma
" main, et que j'étais si accablée qu'à peine j'ai
" suffi aux correspondances de ma famille. Je
" me sens bien, bien malheureuse, et les trois
" mois de tems de passés après la date de nôtre
" affreuse perte en font trois de tourments et
" d'angoisses. La mort de mon fils, de cet ange,
" est venue nous surprendre, nous frapper comme
" un coup de foudre; nous nous livrions à l'es-
" poir, quoique, j'avoue, mon cœur maternel
" éprouvait des angoisses mortelles lorsque
" même on nous en donnait; et malheureusement
" le 19 Novembre les a légitimées; c'est le 27
" que j'ai appris la perte du fils chéri, qui faisait
" le bonheur, la gloire de ma vie, tout le charme
" et la douceur de mon existence. La plume ne
" rend pas ce que j'ai souffert; j'ai cru ne pouvoir
" pas être plus malheureuse, lorsque la journée
" du 14 Décembre m'a fait connaître un nouveau
" genre de souffrance affreuse, voyant mes deux
" fils en danger de vie, et la tranquillité de l'état
" exposée à des chances bien funestes. La miséri-
" corde divine a détourné ce malheur, et la con-
" duite noble de mon fils Nicolas, sa magnanimité,
" sa fermeté, et son admirable abnégation, ainsi
" que le beau courage de Michel, ont sauvé l'état
" et la famille. Cette journée a été si cruelle, que

" lorsque tout fût apaisé le soir, et que je me " retrouvais seule chez moi, je bénissais Dieu de " me retrouver avec ma douleur constante! " Mais quelle horrible histoire; je remercie le " ciel de ce que notre cher Empereur Alexandre " l'a ignorée dans ses détails, quoiqu'il fût infor- " mé de la trame. Bénissons encore le ciel de ce " que les auteurs ne sont pour la plupart que des " jeunes gens très peu marquants, et qui, à l'ex- " ception des chefs, se sont laissé entraîner par " l'orgueil et l'amour-propre, sans prévoir peut- " être l'abîme qu'ils creusaient sous leurs pas. " Les chefs eux-mêmes n'ont pas eu de titre par " leurs services passés à une réputation très dis- " tinguée; il y en a qui ont bien servi, mais, " grâce à Dieu, chez nous en Russie la bravoure " est une vertu héréditaire dans notre militaire; " toutefois il est malheureux qu'ils ont flétri par " leur crime leur réputation d'officiers, et que " leur inconduite fait la désolation de leurs " parents, de leurs épouses. . . . . Le convoi " de notre ange arrive le 20 à Tsarsko-Sélo: jugez " quel jour de douleur et d'angoisse ce sera pour " moi comme toute cette quinzaine qui suivra; " l'enterrement est fixé au 13 Mars; alors il n'y " aura plus que le souvenir seul de cet ange de " bonté qui nous restera."

Years passed away. At the interviews between His Majesty the Emperor Nicholas Pàvlovitch and the Cesarèvitch Constantine, when the conversation fell upon the events which we have been relating, the Cesarèvitch always exhibited evident reluctance to speak on the subject. In 1829 they were travelling together from Zamosc to Lucsz. "I hope," said the Emperor in a moment of familiar confidence, "that now at least you will render justice to my "conduct on that occasion, and to the motives "under which I acted, and that you will confess "that, under the circumstances in which I was "placed, it was impossible for me to act otherwise." The Cesarèvitch again endeavoured to change the conversation, and at last said that perhaps he would leave behind him a document in which would be developed his mode of looking at the affair and the reasons of his conduct. At his death, in 1831, the Emperor, during an interview which he had at Gàtchino with the Princess Lovitzky, who had accompanied thither the body of her deceased husband, communicated to her the above conversation. The Princess replied that, if the Cesarèvitch had executed his intention, something would probably be found in his writing-table, which had been saved in the Warsaw Revolution of 1830, with the legs

broken off, and which had remained from that time sealed up. The table was brought and opened; but nothing was found in it, except an old will, dated in 1808 or 1809, in the form of a short memorandum, and already nullified by the death of the person in whose favour it was made. From that time there glided away more than twenty years, and the affair itself had gradually fallen into oblivion. Unexpectedly, on the death, in August, 1852, of the Minister of the Imperial Court, General Field-Marshal Prince Volkònskii, the examination of his papers led to the discovery of four writing-books filled with one common subject and bearing one common title: "To my beloved Countrymen, "from His Imperial Highness the Cesarèvitch "Grand Duke Constantine Pàvlovitch, a solemn "communication." All the four copy-books were signed at the foot of each page in the Cesarèvitch's own hand, and two of them were enveloped in unsealed covers, addressed, one—to His Majesty the Emperor Nicholas Pàvlovitch; another—to Her Majesty the Empress Mària Feòdorovna. Along with each of these copies was enclosed a letter in the Cesarèvitch's hand and dated "Warsaw," but without year, month, or day. There can be no doubt that this announcement was the document which the Cesarèvitch

had alluded to in 1829, and which, probably in consequence of some change in circumstances, had never been executed, either during his life or at his decease. But how had these papers passed into the possession of Prince Volkònskii, and been preserved, down to his death, in complete secresy from all, not excepting the Emperor himself? To this question there can be but one reply. Soon after the decease of the Cesarèvitch died General Kurùta, a person closely attached to him for many years, and who enjoyed his full confidence. His Majesty the Emperor, without examining the papers left by him, ordered them all to be handed over to Prince Volkònskii. It is natural to suppose that among them was the above document, and that Volkònskii, confining himself to the careful preservation of the papers thus entrusted to him, had never opened them, or at least had never communicated his having done so to any other person; while such of the individuals attached to the person of the Cesarèviteh as had survived Kurùta, and who also might possibly have been aware of the existence and contents of the paper, might have never given publicity to the secret, from not having been authorised to do so on the part of the deceased.

Be this as it may, this "Solemn Communica-

"tion" evidently completes the narrative of the events we have been describing, and therefore we shall insert it among the appendices of our work,* after the two letters from the Cesarèvitch which were found enclosed in the same packets.

Again several years passed away.

The Emperor Nicholas was released from his labours by the death of the righteous, by a death which by its more than earthly grandeur filled the minds of contemporaries with wonder, and remained an object of admiration to posterity.

On the 26th of August, 1856, the successor to his throne and virtues, after imploring the blessing of the Almighty, placed upon his head, in the ancient capital of Russia, the cradle of his own infancy, the crown of his ancestors. Amid the signs and expressions of loyalty on the part of every class in the Empire, the benevolent thought of the Monarch inclined even to those unhappy individuals who, having on one occasion been led astray, some by the illusions of self-confidence, others by the inexperience of youth, had redeemed their fault by thirty years of seclusion and repentance.

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* Vide No. IV. in the Appendix.

On the very day of his Coronation the Emperor Alexander II. pardoned all those who were compromised in the melancholy occurrences of the 14th of December; his mercy extended even to the posterity of the condemned, both to the living and the dead.

"God grant," said the new-crowned Emperor, on commanding the compiler of the present narrative to reprint it in a book for the information of the world, "God grant that from henceforth "a Russian Emperor may not only never have "to punish, but not even to pardon a similar "crime!"

APPENDIX.

No. I.

Copy of a Rescript addressed by His Highness the Cesarèvitch and Grand Duke Constantine Pàvlovitch to the President of the Council of the Empire, Prince Lopukhìn, the 3rd December, 1825.

With the sincerest and profoundest grief I received, with Your Highness's communication of the 27th November, a copy of the journal of the Council of the Empire, which was drawn up on that day, and which set forth all the occurrences consequent upon the lamented demise of His Majesty of happy and ever-venerated memory, the Emperor my benefactor, and the immutable determination of His Imperial Highness Nicholas Pàvlovitch, in conformity to which all the Members of the Council of the Empire have taken, in the Palace Chapel, the oath of allegiance and fidelity in my favour.

Having ever considered it as my most sacred duty to fulfil, with the deepest veneration, the will of His late Majesty the Emperor, I regard it as my unavoidable obligation to declare on the present occasion—that I hold the oath taken in my favour by the Members of the Council of the Empire and other persons as entirely opposed to the will of His late Majesty the Emperor, and for precisely this reason as entirely null and of no effect, and therefore such as I neither will nor can accept.

It is not unknown to Your Highness and to the Council of the Empire, that a packet was deposited in the Archives of the Council of the Empire, under lock and key and the seal of the President, sent from His Majesty

the late Emperor under date August 16, 1823,* containing his last Imperial will and pleasure, exhibited in a copy of an Imperial manifest, wherein His Majesty nominates to be Heir to the Throne the Grand Duke Nicholas Pàvlovitch, in consequence of my voluntary renunciation of the same, as is set forth in a copy of a letter addressed by me to His late Majesty the Emperor.

In the same manner and no less had the Council of the Empire before its eyes the oath administered to all the subjects on the accession to the throne of His late Majesty the Emperor, wherein, among the rest, it is precisely expressed, that every one doth truly and in his very conscience engage himself to serve and in all things obey not only His Imperial Majesty Alexander Pàvlovitch, but likewise His Imperial Highness the Heir of the throne of All the Russias, *who shall be nominated.* Which oath, being repeated on promotion to a higher rank and on other occasions, must necessarily have been preserved with so much the more exactness in the memory of every loyal subject.

As therefore, by the papers opened in the Council of the Empire, the will and supreme pleasure of His Majesty the late Emperor is evidently declared, to wit, that the successor and Heir to the Throne of All the Russias should be nominated the Grand Duke Nicholas Pàvlovitch: so, without breaking the oath already taken, no one could swear any other not administered in favour of Nicholas Pàvlovitch; and consequently I cannot hold as lawful or binding, or take myself, the oath just administered; but being animated by the consciousness of the deep obligation and profound reverence for the supreme will of His Majesty the Emperor of blessed memory, I remain unshaken in my oath and in that irrevocable determination which I declared in my letters to Her Imperial

* We have already stated, in the text of our narrative, that the manifest, though signed on the 16th of August, was not sent to the Council, as may be seen from the above, till the 15th of October.

Majesty the Empress Mària Feòdorovna and to His Imperial Highness the Grand Duke Nicholas Pàvlovitch, dated the 26th of last November, and dispatched by the hands of His Imperial Highness the Grand Duke Michael Pàvlovitch. At the same time I must also add to Your Highness, that the oath of allegiance can be administered in no other way but in conformity with a manifest bearing the Imperial sign-manual.

In thus announcing the pleasure, ever sacred in my eyes, of His Majesty the late Emperor, I hold it also my duty to declare, with the deepest regret, to the Council of the Empire, that that body has on this occasion transgressed its lawful functions in taking in my favour an improper and irregular oath, and the more so as the proceeding in question was entered upon without my knowledge and consent; and the oath thus taken, in inducing others to do the same, and giving an example of the non-performance of a duty incumbent upon every good subject, is irregular and illegal, and therefore ought instantly to be nullified, and instead of it an oath should be administered to His Imperial Majesty Nicholas Pàvlovitch. The which oath of allegiance and fidelity, knowing it to be conformable to the will of His Majesty the deceased Emperor, verbally announced to me by himself, I have been the first to take myself, before the promulgation of the Imperial manifest, announcing the same in my letter to His Imperial Majesty Nicholas Pàvlovitch.

In announcing the above to Your Highness I beg you to take upon yourself the duty of reporting in the proper quarters all that is contained herein, and carrying the same into necessary execution.

The whole of the above I write to Your Highness in reply to your communication to me on the subject, and I request you to acknowledge the receipt of the same by honouring me with your immediate reply.

Appended to this letter I have the honour to inclose to Your Highness the following copies: my letter to Her

Imperial Majesty the Empress Mària Feòdorovna, and a letter from His Majesty the late Emperor to me, with which His Imperial Majesty was pleased to honour me, and also a letter from me to His Imperial Majesty Nicholas Pàvlovitch.

The original was signed in the handwriting of his Imperial Highness,

CONSTANTINE CESARÈVITCH.

Warsaw, December 3rd, 1825.

No. II.

Copy of a Rescript from His Imperial Highness the Cesarèvitch and Grand Duke Constantine Pàvlovitch to the Minister of Justice Prince Lobànoff-Rostòvskii, dated the 8th December, 1825.

THE Councillor of College Nikìtin, serving in the Governing Senate at the table of the Premier-Procureurs, has delivered to me a packet from Your Grace, bearing the following superscription: "To His Imperial Majesty "Constantine Pàvlovitch the humble and dutiful report "of the Minister of Justice."

Not recognising in myself any right to receive the above packet, I return it to Your Grace by the same messenger, as being addressed to me by a title which I do not bear. From a communication addressed by me to His Highness the Acting President of the Council of the Empire, M. the Actual Privy-Councillor of the 1st Class Prince Lopukhìn, under date of the 3rd of this current December, Your Grace must already be informed in detail of the causes which prevent me from accepting the Imperial dignity. It therefore only remains to me to repeat to you on the present occasion, and in an abridged form, that in the oath administered to all

subjects on the accession to the throne of His late Majesty the Emperor Alexander Pàvlovitch of blessed and ever glorious memory, wherein, among other things, it is expressed, that every one must faithfully and truly serve and in all things obey not only His Imperial Majesty the Emperor Alexander Pàvlovitch, but also the Heir Apparent to the Throne of All the Russias, *who should be thereafter nominated;* and that, as this nomination, conformably to the Supreme will of His Majesty the late Emperor, as evidently declared in the papers opened in the Council of the Empire and other documents precisely similar to them, as Your Grace declares, deposited in the Governing Senate, was given in favour of the Grand Duke Nicholas Pàvlovitch, who in virtue thereof became Heir Apparent to the Throne of All the Russias; therefore, in consequence of all the preceding considerations, it became then, and is now, the bounden duty of the Governing Senate, as the Guardian of the Laws, to fulfil with exactness the Supreme will of His Majesty of blessed and never-to-be-forgotten memory the Emperor Alexander Pàvlovitch.

Nevertheless, feeling to the fullest extent the zeal and attachment shown by the Governing Senate in favour of my person, I request Your Grace to express to that highly respectable body my sincere gratitude, adding at the same time, that the more acutely I feel the value of such attachment on their part, the more firmly do I set before myself the duty of continuing to give a scrupulous and immutable obedience to the solemn law established by His Majesty the late Emperor, now with God.

The original was in His Imperial Highness's own hand.

CONSTANTINE CESARÈVITCH.

Warsaw, 8th December, 1825.

No. III.

Answer of the Cesarèvitch and Grand Duke Constantine Pàvlovitch to the announcement of the Emperor Nicholas Pàvlovitch communicating His Majesty's accession to the Throne, dated the 20th of December, 1825.

MOST GRACIOUS SOVEREIGN!

With a heart profoundly touched I had the felicity of receiving the most gracious rescript of Your Imperial Majesty, announcing your joyful accession to the hereditary throne of our beloved Russia.

Her supreme law—a law sacred for all countries where solidity of institutions is respected as the most precious blessing of Heaven—is the will of the Sovereign reigning by Divine appointment. Your Imperial Majesty, in obeying that will, has performed the will of the King of Kings, by whose governance and inspiration earthly Monarchs act in such important circumstances.

The sacred will is accomplished. In contributing to this result, I have done nothing but my duty—the duty of a faithful subject, of a most devoted brother, the duty of a Russian who is proud of the happiness of obeying his God and his Sovereign.

May the mercy of the Almighty Creator, which has so long watched over Russia and her glorious throne, which has so plentifully poured forth all its blessings on the people which has kept its law, be your guide, be your teacher, most gracious Sovereign!

If my constant labours, laid at the foot of your throne, can assist in alleviating the burthen imposed upon You by God, they will appear in my unbounded devotedness, in my fidelity, in my obedience and zeal in the execution of Your Imperial Majesty's Sovereign pleasure.

I fervently implore the Almighty, that His holy and impenetrable Providence may preserve your precious life, may vouchsafe you length of days, and that your

glory, Most Gracious Sovereign, and the glory of Your Empire, may descend without interruption to generation after generation.

Most gracious Sovereign,

Your Imperial Majesty's

The original was signed in His Imperial Highness's own handwriting:

Most faithful subject,

CONSTANTINE.

Warsaw, 20th December, 1825.

No. IV.

1.

Letter from His Imperial Highness the Cesarèvitch, Grand Duke Constantine Pàvlovitch, to His Majesty the Emperor Nicholas Pàvlovitch.

THE decease of His Majesty of blessed and never-to-be-forgotten memory our adored Emperor Alexander Pàvlovitch was accompanied by events so important to the Russian Empire as unquestionably to give rise everywhere to various reports and unfounded conjectures, unless set forth in their true light.

Desiring (as far as possible on my part) to contribute to the removal of such reports and to enforce a conviction of the plain and simple truth on the minds of all and every one, such as the importance of the object itself seems particularly to demand, I have considered it my sacred duty to state all these circumstances in that true and unadulterated simplicity, to which every man who will have to render an account of his actions to an All-seeing God is bound in conscience.

Having to this end prepared a solemn communication to my beloved countrymen, I beg most humbly to present it for the perusal and approbation of Your Imperial Majesty.

If it is honoured by your approval, Most Gracious Sovereign, I venture with all humility to entreat Your Supreme commands to publish it for the public information; if, on the other hand, Your Imperial Majesty's penetration perceives obstacles which have not been foreseen by me, Your Imperial Majesty will then deign to accept this statement as made for Yourself, as an offering submitted by the most dutiful of subjects, with the sincerest feelings of his heart, to his sovereign and to his fellow-countrymen.

At the same time I hold it my duty to inform Your Imperial Majesty that a copy of the accompanying statement has been presented by me together with this to Her Imperial Majesty the Empress Mària Feòdorovna.

2.

Letter from His Highness the Cesarèvitch and Grand Duke Constantine Pàvlovitch to Her Majesty the Empress Mària Feòdorovna.

THE occurrences which took place on the decease of the adored Emperor His Majesty Alexander Pàvlovitch, in as far as they have reference to me personally, are not known to all in their true character and with an exactness corresponding to the importance of the events, without which, undoubtedly, false reports, and even improper insinuations, may arise. Desiring to prevent such reports (as far as it may depend on me to do so), I regard it as my sacred duty to my beloved countrymen, in the solemn communication a copy of which is enclosed in this packet, to state, with full details and with the strictest fidelity to truth, all that I am ready to give an account of to Almighty God with the utmost

purity of conscience. This statement I have presented to His Imperial Majesty the Emperor Nicholas Pàvlovitch, with a most humble and dutiful request that His Majesty will grant His Supreme permission to publish it.

I must humbly entreat Your Most Gracious Majesty to consent to receive from me the copy of this communication as an offering made, with the sincerest feelings of his soul, by the most grateful and dutiful son of the most tender and affectionate of mothers.

3.

To his beloved Countrymen, a Solemn Communication from His Imperial Highness the Cesarèvitch and Grand Duke Constantine Pàvlovitch.

AFTER the lapse of twenty years of the blessed reign of our adored Sovereign of never-to-be-forgotten memory, the Emperor Alexander Pàvlovitch, when there was no longer much hope that there would remain after his decease any direct issue to inherit the throne, I, ardently desiring the welfare and tranquillity of Russia, considered it my duty to direct the gracious attention of His Majesty the Emperor to the most precious object for the state, the accurate designation and establishment of the succession to the Imperial throne.

In the melancholy event of His Majesty's demise during my lifetime, the succession to the throne, by the natural right of seniority and by the law touching the Russian Imperial family, passed to me, even in the event of my not being nominated Heir Apparent. I therefore considered it indispensable to direct the Imperial attention to an object so important to the state, as in the oath in the manifest promulgating the accession to the throne of His Majesty the Emperor Alexander Pàvlovitch the precise expression was, "*and to the heir* "*who may be thereafter nominated,*" and that by such

previous nomination of an heir to the throne might be destroyed even the slightest doubt capable of leading to a conclusion relative to any possible personal interest on my part.

Taking into consideration the possibility of an event so unexpected and so undesirable (an event which, however, by the will of Almighty God, has really occurred), I, in consequence of the questionableness of my rights to the succession, foreseeing respecting the universally-known benevolence of our adored Emperor, the no less notorious greatness of his soul, and the extreme delicacy of his sense of uprightness, co-extensive with his sentiments of heartfelt devotion to the welfare of Russia, I myself, after forming a firm determination, undertook to lay before His Majesty, now with God, the Emperor Alexander Pàvlovitch, my ideas of an affair of so much importance, and, trusting in His Majesty's inappreciable confidence in me, humbly ventured, in 1822, to express a dutiful request to be honoured with His Majesty's supreme permission to make a statement of those ideas. I proposed also my own voluntary intention in the event of the demise without issue of His Majesty,—and as also, in conformity with the manifest of the 20th of March, 1820, containing a supplementary rule amending and completing the former regulations of the Imperial family, I too was to be considered as being without issue capable of inheriting the throne,—of transferring beforehand the right of succession to the line of the Grand Duke Nicholas Pàvlovitch, to whom, after us two, would fall the privilege of preserving, by his posterity, the hereditary unbroken chain of succession.

Having thus firmly determined to make this proposition, I did not lose sight of the fact that in my seniority were included not only my rights but my natural obligations not to refuse the burthen appointed by the will of God to the race chosen to govern the great Russian people. I reasoned with my own conscience that, in renouncing my rights, I was fulfilling the duty of

a good Russian, in contributing, for the tranquillity of Russia, to consolidate a firmly-grounded descent for the succession to the throne, by transferring it beforehand to my younger brother, whose posterity Russia had already before her eyes, and whose eldest son, born in the Kreml in Moscow, the first capital of the Empire, was already a pledge of her future tranquillity. I also argued, that, if I had had children who, by the fundamental law of Russia, promulgated in the reign of my deceased father His Majesty the Emperor Paul, possessed a right to the inheritance of the throne, yet perhaps my countrymen would have grounds for complaining of me that I was renouncing rights belonging not to me alone, but to my issue also, destined by nature itself to inherit and to reign. But finding myself in a precisely contrary position, my renunciation of the right to the succession was a departure from a privilege belonging only to myself personally, and was my own personal sacrifice and duty for the welfare and tranquillity of Russia, founded upon the consideration that the main basis of monarchical government is a constant, uninterrupted, and secure transmission of the throne, in the direct, real, and naturally-appointed line of succession.

Urged by these feelings, and after having, as a preliminary step, obtained the Supreme authorisation, I drew up the above proposition to His Imperial Majesty for my renunciation of the right of succeeding to the throne, and for its transfer beforehand to the person of my beloved younger brother.

His Majesty the Emperor, after listening, deeply affected, to my proposals, in the struggle of his excited feelings, in consequence of his well-known love for Russia and in respect of the equality of our age, from which circumstance it was to be anticipated that the decease of both of us might take place nearly at the same time, honoured with his gracious approbation this my desire and determination, and, at my petition,

having previously consented to the proposal's being submitted to him in writing, deigned first to order a letter to this effect to be prepared, which he deigned to correct with his own hand.

In consequence of this I executed my immutable determination, and delivered to His Imperial Majesty a letter containing my renunciation of my rights to the inheritance of the throne.

Our adored Emperor deigned to communicate both this letter and my whole intention to the knowledge of our most beloved mother, Her Majesty the Empress Mària Feòdorovna, and afterwards condescended to announce to me that Her Imperial Majesty, as well as His Majesty the Emperor, had received with the most gracious and benevolent attention this my sincere proposition, offered for the good of our magnificent Russia: to which effect I had the felicity of being honoured by the personal confirmation of my most beloved mother Her Majesty the Empress, in the presence of Her Imperial Highness the Grand Duchess Mària Pàvlovna. But in the elevated sentiments of his soul, and in his unceasing vigilance in the care of the welfare of Russia, His Majesty the Emperor, though he honoured me with a Supreme Imperial Rescript in his own handwriting, dated the 2nd of February, 1822, announcing his approval and acceptance of my intention and determination, yet for a long time left this important subject without definitive execution by the state-papers, which were sent 18 months and 12 days later to the Council of the Empire, and to the Governing Senate on the 16th of August, 1823.

Thus was accomplished, to my unspeakable happiness, my sacrifice, on the throne of Russia so peculiarly favoured by God, of the offering I had brought.

His Majesty the Emperor in several personal conversations which I subsequently had with him deigned on more than one occasion to repeat expressions of his gratitude at my determination, announced to me (as if

with a presentiment of the will of the Almighty) on this only occasion and for the first and last time in my life, his dispositions, which I listened to with grief and sorrow, in the event of his decease, commanding me as soon as that should happen to take instantly the oath to the person named Heir Apparent to the throne, my beloved brother Nicholas Pàvlovitch, and at the same time to present to my most beloved mother, Her Majesty the Empress Mària Feòdorovna, the above-mentioned Supreme rescript, confirming my renunciation, which was to be preserved by me in secret until the demise of His Majesty the Emperor.

Such was the supreme pleasure of our universally-adored Emperor, touching the nomination, in consequence of my voluntary renunciation, of my younger brother the Grand Duke Nicholas Pàvlovitch, as Heir Apparent to the throne. It is a sacred law, which ought to remain intact even after the decease of His Imperial Majesty, inasmuch as it became incapable, from its containing the nomination of a successor to the Imperial throne, of undergoing, for that very reason, the slightest modification.

All Russia, in taking the oath of allegiance and fidelity *to His Imperial Majesty, the true and natural Most Gracious great Sovereign the Emperor Alexander Pàvlovitch, Autocrat of All the Russias*, swore, at the same time, in the same oath, also *to His Imperial Highness the Heir Apparent to the throne of All the Russias, whosoever shall be hereafter nominated.* All Russia must remain in the immutable observance of this oath, and must repeat it to His Majesty the Emperor Nicholas Pàvlovitch, who, *the true and natural Great Sovereign of Russia, was long ago nominated Heir Apparent to the throne.*

I took the oath according to this, and every other Russian form, and, as the eldest son of Russia, it was my duty to be the first to observe this oath, and to set the example to my countrymen; in doing so I fulfilled

the command of His Majesty of blessed and never-to-be-forgotten memory the Emperor; I fulfilled the most sacred duty of a dutiful brother, of a faithful subject, of a loyal Russian. Almighty God is the witness of the purity of my conscience, and my actions I boldly offer to His judgment-seat and to the tribunal of the universe.

On receiving, on the 25th of November last, at 7 o'clock in the evening, the intelligence of the decease of my adored Emperor, which took place at Taganròg on the 19th of the same month, which melancholy and afflicting tidings was communicated in a report from the Chief of the Staff of His Imperial Majesty, General-Aide-de-Camp Baron Diebitch and General Aide-de-Camp General of Infantry Prince Volkònskii, I, not knowing of any ulterior arrangements that might have been made by His Majesty the late Emperor, further than the paper which I had been commanded to keep in secresy, without the least delay, as far as my strength permitted, overwhelmed with this blow, and as far as physical possibility allowed the preparation of the necessary papers, that is to say, on the 26th of November, I announced, in letters sent off by His Imperial Highness the Grand Duke Michael Pàvlovitch, and addressed by me to Her Imperial Majesty the Empress Mària Feòdorovna and to His Imperial Majesty Nicholas Pàvlovitch, the confirmation of my former determination and my immoveable continuance in the sincere and voluntary renunciation of the succession to the throne; and in consequence of these intentions, receiving as a sacred duty and observing with the deepest reverence the supreme will of His Majesty the Emperor of blessed and never-to-be-forgotten memory, verbally announced to me, I was the first person to take the oath of faithful allegiance in my letter to His Imperial Majesty Nicholas Pàvlovitch.

Having done this, I awaited further orders from His Majesty the Emperor who had just ascended the throne, in the same spot where I was placed by the duties of

my rank and by the will of His Majesty the late Emperor, and for the same reason I held it to be my evident duty to put in execution what I had been ordered to perform in the event of the decease of His Imperial Majesty, in order, by so doing, to prolong, at a most important moment, the action of the just terminated reign, as far as was possible for me to do so in the deeply afflicted state of my feelings, which were shared with me by all the other persons placed under my orders by the Imperial command. We therefore remained in tranquil expectation of the manifest announcing the accession and ordering the oath to be administered in favour of the new lawful Emperor of Russia. But what was my astonishment when I received, instead of such a manifest, a communication from the Acting President of the Council of the Empire, Actual Privy-Councillor of the 1st Class Prince Lopukhìn, that the Council of the Empire had taken the oath in my favour, and how overpowering and how painful was my surprise when I saw, by the copy of the journal of the Council of the Empire, transmitted to me together with His Highness Prince Lopukhìn's communications, that the Supreme pleasure of Our universally-adored Emperor, His late Majesty of blessed and never-to-be-forgotten memory, had already been made known to the Council of the Empire, at the moment of the arrival of the melancholy intelligence of His Majesty's decease; that in the archives of the Chancery of the Empire (of which circumstance I myself, as I have already stated, was in complete ignorance) had been deposited, under lock and key and under the seal of the President, a packet, sent by His Majesty the late Emperor on the 16th of August, 1823, bearing the sign manual of His Majesty, and addressed to Secretary of State Olènin; that in this packet was an enclosure directed to the President of the Council of the Empire Prince Lopukhìn, and in the latter a sealed envelope with the following superscription written in His Majesty's own hand: "To be preserved in

" the Council of the Empire till called for by myself; " and in case of my death, before any other steps are " taken, to be opened in an extraordinary Meeting of " the Council;" that papers, precisely similar to these which had been deposited in the Council of the Empire, had been also placed in the Governing Senate; and that, lastly, the Council of the Empire, on opening the said packet, listened with deeply-affected feelings to the last will of His Majesty the late Emperor Alexander Pàvlovitch of blessed and never-to-be-forgotten memory, as indicated in a copy of a supreme manifest, bearing the sign-manual of His late Majesty the Emperor, in which His Majesty nominates *as Heir Apparent to the throne the Grand Duke Nicholas Pàvlovitch*, in consequence of my voluntary renunciation thereof, as is expressed in a copy of my letter addressed to His Majesty the late Emperor, and which is also countersigned in His Majesty's hand and appended to the copy of the supreme manifest,—the Council of the Empire, I say, only listened to this sacred and solemn indication of the will of His Majesty the Emperor, but without obeying it, and, carried away by the expressions of His Imperial Majesty Nicholas Pàvlovitch's feelings of fraternal tenderness for me, instantly proceeded to take in my favour that oath of fidelity and allegiance which belonged only *to the Heir Apparent of the Imperial throne, established so evidently and so solemnly by the will of the true and natural Sovereign the Emperor.*

Most worthy of respect, unquestionably, when expressed by the lawful successor to the throne, His Imperial Majesty Nicholas Pàvlovitch, of these elevated feelings of respect for an elder brother. A regulated amount of respect for such feelings must be entertained by every faithful subject; but far superior to all these are the rights and duties of him who is appointed by lawful authority successor to the throne. God himself points out the races destined to govern the other races of mankind. It is He who, by the order of nature, or by the

supreme will of the wearers of the crown, makes manifest His own holy pleasure, which mortal man cannot without sin transgress, and my heartfelt grief only the more abundantly overwhelms me with inexpressible sorrow, as in this proceeding of the Council of the Empire I perceive the supposition of a readiness on my part not only to receive, but even, perhaps, to demand back a right to the succession of the crown, which I had renounced freely, voluntarily, solely from love to Russia and out of regard for her welfare and tranquillity—a right accepted by lawful supreme authority, and which, lastly, had been transferred, in lawful order, to a worthy brother, gifted, by Divine grace, not only with all the noblest qualities of the heart, forming in themselves a pledge of the happiness of Russia, but also blessed with posterity—a circumstance so invaluable to the country.

Having said thus much for the relief of a heart overwhelmed with affliction, for the relief of a soul plunged in the deepest sorrow, I, tranquil at least in my conscience, repose in the hope of always enjoying the confidence of my most August brother His Majesty the Emperor Nicholas Pàvlovitch. I trust to the hope of retaining the love and gratitude of my fellow-countrymen, as the whole career of a more than thirty years' service to Their Majesties the Emperors my father and my brother, distinguished by the unlimited confidence of Their Imperial Majesties, in a word, all my efforts and my whole life have been pure and stainless. I have renounced my rights, but without betraying my duties. The greatness of the Russian throne, founded on the welfare of the Empire, will be, till the last instant of my life, the only aim for all the energies of my soul and body.

Appended to this paper are copies *a*) of my letter to Her Imperial Majesty the Empress Mària Feòdorovna, of the 26th November, 1825, to which is also affixed, likewise in a copy, the Supreme rescript addressed to me by His Imperial Majesty the late Emperor, of the 2nd

February, 1822; *b*) of my letter to His Imperial Majesty the Emperor Nicholas Pavlovitch, of the 26th November, 1825; *c*) of the journal of the Council of the Empire, of the 27th November, 1825, sent with the communication of the President of the Council, Actual Privy Councillor of the 1st Class Prince Lopukhin; *d*) of my answer to this journal, of the 3rd December, 1825, addressed to the Prince Lopukhin. These documents will serve as a testimony to the truth of what I have set forth above.*

* All these papers will be found above, either in the text of our narrative, or in the Appendix.

THE END.

LONDON: PRINTED BY WILLIAM CLOWES AND SONS, STAMFORD STREET, AND CHARING CROSS.

Digitized with financial assistance from the
Government of Maharashtra
on 28 September, 2015